

I was anticipating his next question. Indeed I was because his question in English was exactly the same as his question in French.

Mr. Rodriguez: No it wasn't.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member has put his question and the Right Hon. Prime Minister has answered it. I just want to remind Hon. Members that the question was getting a long way away from the administration of government.

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• (1450)

NUCLEAR ENERGY

REPORT OF CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

In his March 31 news release, the Minister announced the establishment of a co-ordinating committee consisting of himself, Dr. Hatcher, the Acting President of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and Mr. Bruce Howe, Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, to consider future directions for the corporation.

Given the importance of energy, medical research and high technology to both the short and long-term future requirements of our country, can the Minister say when that report on the future of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited will be ready for presentation to Cabinet? Will he be making the report public? The Minister will know that there are precedents for such reports having been made public in the past.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is correct in his facts as to the organization of the work that is being undertaken regarding the future of AECL. He is also correct in terms of the importance of the work of AECL, and he outlined that.

I cannot confirm for him when Cabinet will be discussing the future of AECL. I think he understands Cabinet confidences. But I can say to him, as I mentioned to the Energy Committee when asked whether I would release the consultant's report, that if possible, I would release

it. However, I cannot release the report or even consider its release until I have it in my hands.

Oral Questions

LETTER TO AECL EMPLOYEES

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew): Mr. Speaker, in his letter to the Atomic Energy of Canada employees, the Minister stated that the sources for continuing the necessary level of research and development funding are uncertain. Then, in the same letter, he told them that the federal Government fully supports the Canadian nuclear program.

How can the Minister say that the Government fully supports AECL's medical research, its energy program, its engineering projects such as the Canadarm, and at the same time tell the employees that he does not know where the next dollar is coming from? This is a very key question.

Will the Minister leave the company's profits with the corporation for future research and development, and will he not continue to sell off to private enterprise its profitable assets such as the radio medical isotopes operation and its cobalt therapy cancer treatment production? All of these have been developed with public funds.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Hon. Member that some of the next dollars for AECL will continue to come from the public purse. What I also have to tell the Hon. Member is that AECL, as any other nuclear company, whether privately or publicly owned, are looking for more and more of their resources from the utilities and from the users of that technology.

If he is asking me where I hope to get more money, I hope to get more money from Ontario Hydro. I hope to get more money from the Ontario Government. I hope to get more money from the users of the technology. I would hope that he would want to back that up as well for the very reasons that we are looking for support for the continuation of AECL. Its problem has been that it has not had a relationship with the private sector, and has not been getting money back for the technology that it has developed. I thought the Hon. Member, who also supports AECL as I have done for many years, would understand that and back me up. I hope he does.