

Rebuttal to Criticism of criticism

By Roy Johnston

I feel compelled to reply to Mr. Linklettler and Mr. Lai's comments in last week's *Netted Gem*, regarding the nuclear issue. There are several facts which are crucial to our understanding of this issue:

Fact #1: Disposal of nuclear fuel is linked with the arms race and nuclear proliferation: The Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd., (AECL), as Mr. Dixon stated in his presentation, is considering re-processing spent nuclear fuel to remove the plutonium. This is one option open to the AECL when the wastes are being disposed. Plutonium is not found in nature, it is man-made, and it is extremely toxic (a minute particle inhaled into the lungs can produce cancer). Plutonium is also the essential ingredient in most nuclear weapons. Several studies, the Commission in the United Kingdom, and the Porter Commission in Ontario have identified the proliferation of nuclear weapons as a crucial question to be addressed.

Fact # 2: Mining, milling, and refining of uranium ore produce radioactive wastes: Effective

means of waste disposal at these stages of the nuclear fuel pathway have not been implemented. As Mr. Dixon admitted, millions of tons of radioactive wastes are presently polluting the environment in several Canadian communities.

The AECL should assume at least some of the responsibility for safely disposing of these toxic materials since it is the AECL who controls and regulates all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle. If we lived near one of these mining communities perhaps we would recognize that the safe disposal of the nuclear wastes is a major concern.

Fact #3: There is no safe level of exposure to radiation: We have evolved over centuries while living in a background of natural radiation from sources such as the sun and from sources found in the earth. This radiation covers a wide spectrum of frequencies, from invisible infrared (heat), to visible energy (light), to higher cosmic energy. This energy is, for the most part, beneficial; solar radiation is converted by plants into sugars which support growth and provide food for animals and

people; burning the stored energy in wood releases heat and light energy providing warmth against the cold. However, certain types of radiation cause ionization within the molecules of cellular structures of living organisms, including people. Not all radiation produces ionization, sleeping in a warm bed or turning on a light bulb do not produce harmful ionizing radiation. Ionizing radiation includes: X-rays, alpha particles, beta particles, and gamma rays. The nuclear industry produces vast quantities of ionizing

types radiation. Ionizing radiation is produced when certain unstable elements such as uranium ²³⁵ break apart in fission. The result of all exposure to ionizing radiation has been described by Dr. Karl S. Morgan, as "a mad-man loose in a library". The cell may die or may be altered. This

Fact #4: Nuclear generated electricity provides less than 1%

of total world energy production: To suggest that much of the world would be freezing in the dark if we didn't develop nuclear energy is just not true. The nuclear industry has received billions of dollars of subsidies from taxpayers and still finds itself with very few sales of new reactors. The industry in Canada has resorted to price fixing of uranium and kickback payments to foreign agents to try and sell CANDU reactors abroad.

Fact #5: The power of the atom was first developed in a secret military operation conducted by American, British and Canadian scientists. It was called the Manhattan Project. Canada provided the uranium for these first nuclear weapons. Almost all of this project was conducted in complete secrecy with even the U.S. Congress and the Canadian Parliament not being informed. The "peaceful use" of nuclear power has often provided a cover for the continuing escalation of nuclear military production.

The present production and stockpiling of nuclear wastes presents serious health and environmental problems for Canada. The

record of the world's industries in providing technical solutions for toxic wastes is not reassuring. Shouldn't we be cautious? While the problems of waste disposal is being addressed, doesn't it make sense to stop producing more wastes until a proven solution is developed.

However, the solutions must be ones which reflect the larger social, political and economic factors. We can't just isolate nuclear waste disposal and ignore other important issues related to public health, proliferation of nuclear weapons, energy policy and public participation in the decision-making process. We must try to integrate all of these aspects together in order to find solutions that will truly reflect our love for the earth and all life.

It is important that we all understand the issues involved and the we press government and industry to mobilize the resources necessary to provide the best solutions. The information presented here, my questions at Mr. Dixon's lecture, and my criticism of his presentation have been intended to constructively contribute to our understanding of this important issue.

LETTERS...

Off-Campus Student Housing

It would seem that students, especially those who do not live on campus, have a concern and vested interest in finding secure and reasonable housing in the university area for a fair price.

This concern was brought to the attention of the Student Union at its latest general meeting. Hopefully this letter will shed some light on what students can do, if as tenants they are unhappy with any aspect of their premises. Following are a few points which may be of interest.

Currently rent increases of 3% yearly are allowed on heated or unheated premises. There must be twelve months between rent increases with a minimum of ninety days notice before such an increase can become effective. On premises where the rent did not increase in the past calendar year, a 5% increase is allowable.

Under the Rent Review Act, it is

the responsibility of the landlord to obtain approval from the Rentalsman for an increase exceeding the allowable percentage.

Before a landlord can evict a tenant the landlord must apply for and obtain a court order. Tenants have the right to go before a judge and argue against eviction. However, to end a tenancy agreement the landlord must give one month's notice, just as the tenant must do a month before leaving.

Because landlords are people who wish to provide a proper service at a proper price, one which will allow them some profit they cannot be criticized for rent increases provided they operate in accordance with the above noted laws.

The Rentalsman is a civil servant working for both landlords and tenants. John Comeau is the present P.E.I. Rentalsman. His office is located at 11 Kent Street. If a tenant feels any rent is un-

justified, the Rentalsman can set up an informal hearing to review the landlord's request.

The Prince Edward Island Tenant's Association is a further informative avenue for student tenants. The Association is a non-profit citizen's organization formed in reaction to what it perceived to be abuses of tenant's rights by landlords. The aim of the Association is to help tenants organize to develop common policies that will improve conditions for tenants. Michael LeClair is the spokesperson for the Association and can be contacted at 892-3790.

If any student wishes further information, I can be tracked down in the Library Lounge.

Students of U.P.E.I. must collectively show the University their interest in alternative housing in the campus area. Any ideas students may have would be greatly appreciated.

Thank-you for the space.

Parker Grimmer

Psychology

Dear Fellow Psychology Majors:

The department is undergoing some major changes. We have a right and a responsibility to voice our opinions. I personally feel that there is room for change, especially in the area of course selection. Freudian theory and a basic counseling course would be a welcome addition.

Please call me, mornings at 894-9744 if you care to become involved. Or you can drop off your ideas at the Psychology department.

Susan Boyd

Effective Reading

Fellow Students:

Do you find it hard to complete your reading assignments? I had this problem prior to taking the Effective Reading Course. Before I decided to take this course, I thought it could be a waste of time. I recently completed the fall session and discovered it was well worth the time as I made major improvements in my abilities.

The next session starts at the beginning of the second semester in January 1986. The session consists of 2 hours of class-time as

well as 3 hours of lab time for 6 weeks. The objective is to improve your reading speed. As a result, you will see improvements in vocabulary and comprehension. In the lab, you work independently by the means of electronic equipment. This course helps your concentration and retention. The course consists of tips and techniques to improve study habits.

Prior to taking this course, I found it hard to keep up with my reading assignments. Now, I have lots of time to review the material before exams as well as finding time for a new interest: Pleasure reading.

May I urge you to take the time to become a more effective reader. It is well worth the time!

A Surprised Student

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