

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF
HOUSE OF KEYS
(LEGISLATION AND OTHER MATTERS)
Douglas, Tuesday, 26th February 2002
at 10.00 a.m.**

Present:

The Speaker (the Hon J A Brown) (Castletown); Mr D M Anderson (Glenfaba); Hon A R Bell and Mr L I Singer (Ramsey); Mr R E Quine OBE (Ayre); Mr J D Q Cannan (Michael); Mrs H Hannan (Peel); Hon S C Rodan (Garff); Mr P Karran, Hon R K Corkill and Mr A J Earnshaw (Onchan); Mr G M Quayle (Middle); Messrs J R Houghton and R W Henderson (Douglas North); Hon D C Cretney and Mr A C Duggan (Douglas South); Hon R P Braidwood and Mrs B J Cannell (Douglas East); Hon A F Downie and Hon J P Shimmin (Douglas West); Hon J Rimington and Mr Q B Gill (Rushen); with Mr M Cornwell-Kelly, Secretary of the House.

The Chaplain took the prayers.

Leave of Absence Granted

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have granted leave of absence to Mr Gelling, the hon. member for Malew and Santon, to Mr Duggan, the hon. member for Douglas South, and to Mrs Crowe, member for Rushen.

Sellafield — Nuclear Power Reactors — Opposition to — Debate Commenced

Item 21. Mr Singer to move:

That this House:

- (1) *confirms its support of government policy to seek the early closure of Sellafield on safety and security grounds; and*
- (2) *expresses its opposition to the commissioning of any further civil nuclear power reactors in the United Kingdom and wishes that these views should be expressed to the United Kingdom Government immediately.*

The Speaker: We now move on to item 21 on the order paper and I call on the hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to move the resolution as printed at item 21 on the agenda.

Part (1) of this motion is to basically reaffirm the policy of this government to continue to seek the closure of Sellafield. Various questions have been asked in this House and in another place during the last few weeks, and answers and further questions have not brought forward any contrary view. I believe we should, as a newly elected House, reaffirm that policy.

The arguments concerning Sellafield and its dangers of pollution are valid particularly in the case of the Isle of Man and since the tragic events of September 11th last year. The potential disaster of terrorist action which took place then is something that will live in our minds for ever, but there is also the potential disaster of terrorist actions only 25 miles from our shores which the UK could not prevent, and so we should be mindful that there is this time bomb ticking away on our doorstep.

The threat of terrorist action is real. The possibility of an accident in an industry prone to such occurrences is also real. Sellafield has had its own mishaps. There is an ever-present potential for the large scale release of radioactive material into the atmosphere and the sea, not forgetting that even now there are releases into the atmosphere and sea continuously.

We should also not forget that the burial of radioactive material is far from being an art, and this is all occurring within about 25 miles of these shores.

To complete this section (1) I would like to give some information to hon. members which compares the radioactive pollution of soil near Chernobyl and Sellafield in 1998, because this is also relevant to the second part of this motion.

A report issuing from Amsterdam on 9th October 1998: 'The area around the Sellafield reprocessing plant is as heavily contaminated with radioactivity as a zone around the stricken Chernobyl reactor in the Ukraine. This is a conclusion emerging from the analyses of soil samples. Both were commissioned by Greenpeace and examined by the University of Bremen.' It said over the past few weeks that the University of Bremen analysed the samples taken by Greenpeace in the area around Chernobyl. A comparison with radioactive pollution in the area around the UK reprocessing plant at Sellafield leads to the alarming conclusion that some of the figures for radioactivity at Sellafield are even higher than those around Chernobyl. They then give some figures. The pollution from americium 241 radioactive isotope in a soil sampled 800 metres from the reactor in the Chernobyl disaster is around 1,300 becquerels per kilogram. In soil sampled seven miles away from the Sellafield plant, pollution from this isotope is as much as 30,000 becquerels per kilogram. The analysis also found cobalt 60 values up to 40 becquerels per kilogram near Sellafield with the Chernobyl figure being 10. And the figures for caesium 137: in concentrations up to 9,400 becquerels per kilogram, seven miles from the UK reprocessing plant compared to 7,400 outside Chernobyl. So it is quite clear there is already an unacceptable radioactivity level in areas around Sellafield, so I hope hon. members will have no problem in support part (1) of this motion.

If I may now turn to part (2), which invites this hon. House to declare its opposition to the commissioning of any further commercial nuclear power reactors in the UK. My colleague, Mr Henderson, has asked a series of questions on nuclear safety in recent weeks and I am sure that he will wish to pull together the main points of those discussions. The hon. member for Peel has also expressed considerable concern at the present ongoing situation, and I hope that she too will make a contribution to this debate.

The hon. Chief Minister, in his reply to my question on the UK Cabinet performance and innovation unit report, said that he did not believe there are any definite proposals for the construction of new nuclear power stations. My first response to that is to say that we do not wait until the proposals are definite, we should be voicing our concern at any tentative proposals.

The Chief Minister also said that there is no laid-down policy of the Manx Government in relation to the generation of electricity by nuclear power. If nuclear power generation held no risk to this Island and our community, then there would be no need to adopt a policy in that regard, but with nuclear facilities on the west coast of England and, Scotland and as I say, only about 25 miles separating us from Sellafield, we are at greater risk than the majority of UK residents.

Since the Chief Minister's answers, the UK Cabinet's report has been published. It recommends that the nuclear power option should be left open and that any new plants should be exempt from carbon tax giving them a subsidy compared with coal- or gas-fired plants. The pressure on the UK, of course, is from the Kyoto Agreement to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. However, if the subsidies which are being given to the nuclear industry over many years had been invested into clean energy resources such as wind turbines, solar and wave power, much could have been achieved in reducing the carbon dioxide emissions. Nuclear executives have welcomed the government's decision to remove this carbon tax but claim they will still be unable to finance nuclear plants. However, there are still proposals by the industry to build 15 new nuclear stations including on the west coast of Scotland.

Our concern relates to the potential dangers of new plants particularly in areas not far from this Island rather than the cost of producing energy in the United Kingdom. But also more plants mean more reprocessing at Sellafield. (**Mrs Hannan:** Hear, hear.) Reprocessing was first developed for the isolation of plutonium for nuclear weapons. Commercial reprocessing was developed later to provide plutonium for breeder reactors.

The first reprocessing plant was opened in 1963 at West Valley, New York State. Whilst it was described as a unique operation and a symbol of imagination and foresight, six years later it was said to be too hot to handle and had to close.

Two commercial reprocessing plants now serve the world's reactors: Sellafield and Cap de la Hague in France, the latter being famous for the leukaemia clusters around the plant. At Sellafield millions of litres of effluent carrying plutonium and other transuranic elements and fusion products are discharged into the Irish Sea daily. Plutonium is absorbed on seabed silt and is washed onto beaches, making them radioactive, and the ocean currents carry them as far away as the Scandinavian coasts. I have often thought that Cumbria tourism might well claim 'we do not have any blue flag beaches but we will give you a healthy glow.' After 40 years of nuclear power, not one kilogram of high level waste has been disposed of in a permanent repository, because the problem is not only technical but also political. Brian Wilson, the UK energy minister, has said that the construction of new nuclear power stations could take place before a resolution of how to handle existing nuclear waste is decided.

The question is, hon. members, can we accept the risks caused by the continuation of accumulation and dumping of radioactive waste by continuing to support nuclear power regeneration? For the Isle of Man the answer must be an unequivocal 'no'. New nuclear power stations will mean the continued reprocessing and dumping of radioactive waste. New nuclear power stations will also mean higher risk of accident and terrorist action.

If I may briefly refer to the answers the hon. minister of the DHSS made in another place when commenting on the level of plutonium in the teeth of children living around Sellafield which she said was not a risk, that, hon. members, is not the full story. Firstly, individual tooth plutonium levels were not mentioned but averaged over a sample of 50 teeth tested together. Secondly plutonium is not equally distributed around the body. The concentration in certain lymph nodes is 440 times greater than in the teeth and the skeleton. Thirdly a one-tenth micron-sized particle in the body is enough to cause cancer or health problems. When lodged in the body, whilst it may not be widely distributed, it will give continuous emissions in a concentrated area. Now, the plutonium we are talking about, plutonium 238, has a half-life of 87 years, plutonium 239 has a half-life of 24,000 years, so within tissues plutonium is accumulative and is not dissipated. Therefore, as it recycles, it accumulates in greater and greater quantities in the body, and scientists say that there is no safe level in the body to ensure that DNA is not affected and mutations occur.

We are not aware of how much radioactive materials are being leaked. As years go by, it is an increasing and unsolvable problem continually being added to by nuclear reaction and reprocessing.

Now, an argument may be put forward today to say we do not know whether the electricity arriving here by cable is produced by nuclear stages or not, so it would be hypocritical to oppose that method of production. That, to me, is not an argument. The question is not how the electricity is produced but the dangers that are caused by the process, which is not safe and is presenting a major risk to the health and safety of the people of the Isle of Man including the potential terrorist attack.

Another argument could be that there are no actual dates for commencing the construction of new nuclear plants, so we cannot oppose them at this stage. That argument in my mind is also fallacious and is a total fudge. If we have principles then we stand by them. In this

argument there can be no compromises, because the nuclear industry is in such a state and neither it nor the British Government can offer any other guarantees we require for our safety. In reality we are in a David and Goliath situation where we, as David, are clearly the underdog, but if we make this stand we may well get support from other sources who accept our argument.

This is the long-term aim, but let us make our policy quite clear. We are not getting any acceptable assurances from the UK government. Their judgement is that it is too expensive to protect their own people. They have said nothing to mitigate our concerns of eliminating both short-term and long-term dangers, so I believe that at the start of this new administration it is the right time to declare a definite policy and communicate it as forcibly as we can to the UK Government. The nuclear industry has a poor record in general and the accidents are unacceptable with their consequences on human life and the environment.

Hon. members, I would ask you to support both sections of this resolution on behalf of your constituents, their future and their children's future. It is in the interests of the UK Government energy production levels and employment to support Sellafield and new nuclear reactors and to consider that the risks are acceptable, including the potential dangers attached to each new reactor. It is in the interests of the Isle of Man to see reduced levels of atmospheric, sea and land contamination and the elimination of the potential of accidents and terrorist actions against nuclear sites. I so move, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to second this important motion before us today, and in commencing my contribution I would just like to point out that possibly one of the single biggest threats to this Island is some 20 miles across from Douglas beach sitting over at Sellafield, and I was surprised this morning that this debate did not make the 8 o'clock news on Manx Radio. We got Question Time but I think this is an important debate.

Also, there was mention in an article on the radio this morning about the health and safety and making Sellafield as safe as possible. The whole reason for being here this morning and raising these issues is the fact that you cannot have a safe nuclear reactor; you cannot have safe nuclear reprocessing. Radioactive material is dangerous at whatever level, and the point I would make to hon. members in relation to that is that although we are told, 'Oh, it is beneath the required levels', blah blah blah - just think about lead poisoning, hon. members. A little a day for many years is fine, you can get away with it until you get to your older years and then the results of a little a day manifest themselves with the most awful consequences, as is well documented. The Romans suffered it more than anyone else without realising what was going on.

Now, I see the concerns in relation to Sellafield and nuclear power as a combination of three components: public health and environmental pollution, health and safety and security. I will direct my concerns towards Sellafield but they are completely pertinent to any nuclear installation to a lesser or, God forbid, greater extent and therefore apply to all aspects of this motion. Sellafield is a good example to draw down on. The fears I have in relation to this facility are equally well founded towards any further power installations the UK Government is plotting to commission, as my hon. colleague has alluded to. My hon. friend opposite has already gone into the public health and environmental pollution aspects, so I will not dwell on this subject to any great length, but I do need to put a few points over in this respect. Nuclear energy, which Albert Einstein was given credit for discovering, and he is reported to have said immediately on discovering nuclear fission, 'What have I done?' realising the global potential for the release of an unstoppable destruction and pollution.

Everyone here should know that there is no solution to nuclear matter or waste, as is the bigger issue with Sellafield. This plant, which was supposed to turn nuclear waste into far

less hazardous glass blocks, has not produced any. What we have is large, antiquated storage tanks containing a dangerous radioactive soup constantly stirred, ensuring it is stable, and a 15-year backlog of processing, the whole site sitting like a silent time bomb ticking away pumping nuclear effluent into our seas 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. 'Emotive stuff', you might say, but when we delve into the technicalities of what is happening on the Sellafield site and its associated areas, it is even more frightening, and do not forget there is another nuclear plant we hardly ever hear of, and that is based at Heysham just a few miles down the coast from where I am illustrating at the minute.

We are continually being told radioactive levels of sea discharges are with defined limits. What I have always asked: do we know if the defined level of discharges are not harmful to the environment and public health? That has never been answered, as my hon. colleague has already pointed out.

The hon. member, Mr Singer, has demonstrated the high and irregular amounts of plutonium in children's teeth. It is also known, Mr Speaker and hon. members, birds in the general area of Sellafield were measured to be radioactive as well.

The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland has revealed in its annual report that radioactive contamination from the Cumbrian plant found in seaweed was 150 times higher on the north-east coast of Ireland than in seaweed on the south and west coasts. It is also reported by other sources that the seabed around Sellafield is dead and that the trees near the area are showing signs of unnatural defoliation and die-back. It does not surprise me, pumping its effluent out into our sea and air as it does.

I do not care what they say about it being within permitted levels. We have no real idea what trouble is being stored up or for our children. We know there are unusual cancer clusters appearing in epidemiological studies of the area; we know that radiation can cause cancers and unusual types of cancer; this can be none better illustrated than by the unfortunate men who were forced to take part in the nuclear test trials in the Pacific during the 1950s and 1960s. The British Government is still trying to deny any harmful effects of that one.

The health and safety record at Sellafield is a well-documented nightmare of calamities which could have been national disasters. We even had the scandal of alleged falsifying records of radioactive levels of waste giving higher levels in lower category record, all reported in the UK national press. And there have been other accidents which have shut down the MOX section of this plant, and this is the section they want to ramp up to take more waste for processing.

There have always been problems. In a recent report in the *Guardian* newspaper we see 'Making Britain's nuclear waste safe will cost £1 billion a year for the next 10 to 15 years. The legacy of the cold war and British nuclear fuels operations at Sellafield are the main obstacles to safe recovery of the waste, only 15 per cent of which have been properly dealt with. There are still large tanks of high-level waste that have to be monitored, stirred and cooled round the clock to prevent a nuclear chain reaction. It will take 15 years to catch up on the backlog.' This was from the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate himself, Laurence Williams, the Chief Inspector.

The inspectorate is further quoted in this article stating many old buildings would fall apart before the radioactive waste inside ceased to be dangerous. Between 15 and 20 new plants would be needed to pack and compact this waste into concrete to be stored.

BNFL became technically bankrupt when its long-term liabilities exceeded its assets. The NII and the Department of Trade and Industry is concerned that the expertise to deal with the nuclear legacy may also be gradually lost as the interest in this aspect of nuclear science is waning.

Further, a report was recently published by the NII into the accident at Chapel Cross reactor in Dumfries, when fuel rods were dropped 80 feet to the bottom of the reactor and lay undiscovered for seven days. The inspectorate concluded that BNFL had not tried to hide the fact that 12 fuel rods were missing and had fallen; the problem was, the company's workers had just not realised it had happened - the same company that runs Sellafield.

I would put it to this hon. House that that report alone should instill a sense of urgency and importance into this situation. Put into perspective, as I say, Sellafield can be seen just 18 miles away or so on a good day - a similar distance as a drive to the Point of Ayre. It is nestled on the coast with a mountainous blast shield behind it, which could have the potential effect to focus any large-scale contamination outwards towards this Island.

These accidents occur with frightening frequency, and what makes it worse is much of it goes unnoticed for days. The British energy business and its policies are in tatters. One minute it is all 'go for green,' then the next minute it is 'we will be getting 15 new nuclear reactors'. I do not see any public health and safety or environmental commitment but this strategy - no commitment, no strategy, go for the easiest option, and we and the Republic of Ireland are in the firing line for someone else's pollution incompetence.

Over the top? I do not think so. The UK Government has also been told by an expert at the House of Commons Defence Committee that it has not done a proper assessment of the consequences of any accident concerning these storage tanks which would put the Isle of Man at immediate risk. A national and global disaster waiting to happen, Chernobyl being the archetypal disaster. That makes me feel very, very uncomfortable.

Finally, national security and community safety from terrorist attack. Prior to September 11th, people would have branded me a crank for voicing concerns about the potential threat from terrorism or accuse me of overegging the issue. Well, who on earth would have thought that, prior to September 11th, hijacked airliners would be deliberately flown and crashed into those massive buildings in New York and the Pentagon? I am still convinced that the one which crashed in Pennsylvania was on its way to the White House. No-one would have believed the possibility of airliners being used as weapons of mass destruction and all the passengers on board assigned to their deaths. That thought would not have been entertained by most people - 'too extreme; no-one would do that'. Well, they did do that, thousands of people were murdered and we are still suffering the repercussions which have rippled around the planet. If someone tried to raise the security issues of that kind prior to September 11th in relation to air safety and national security, they would have been laughed out of court, a prophet of doom and a crank.

Here is a small piece from the *Observer* newspaper pertinent to this debate and my principal concerns: 'Ministers have been warned that a determined terrorist attempt to fly an aeroplane into the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant could not be prevented because of its proximity to transatlantic flight paths. The warning from MI5 came after tornado fighters were scrambled over the plant in response to a reported hijack attempt. The position at Sellafield is unthinkable, an intelligence source confirmed. If it were hit successfully, everything within 150 miles could go. The position has now been made clear to the minister. Sellafield is two minutes from the transatlantic flight path. Even if you had a warning that plane had been hijacked, you would have no real opportunity to intercept a plane flying at 400 or 500 miles per hour. By the time you listened to a call reporting the hijack, it could be all over. More than 200 flights a day pass within 50 miles of Sellafield and Cumbria. They come not just from Heathrow but from continental Europe. Two-mile exclusion zones are enforced around the plant but these only apply to a height of 3,000 feet. Two miles would provide just 14 seconds warning of an approaching aircraft flying at 500 miles per hour.' Now, that has come from MI5 according to that press article.

I was laughed at in here the other week when I suggested that we should make a call for surface-to-air missiles to be placed around Sellafield as the French authorities were reported to have done around their nuclear facilities. I was quite correct to make that call, and this information, which gives 14 seconds warning of an impending attack, should wipe the smile off anyone's face who was laughing last time, as the only hope of stopping a rogue airliner under these circumstances would be a missile. And now we know the UK Government have admitted through the press that there are no surface-to-air missiles at Sellafield and none likely to be as it would be, in their words, 'impractical'. My foot! They do not want the expense, more like it, and charge with our national security and as we can see by this information, which is more than the UK Government was originally prepared to give this government - we have all seen the pathetic letter circulated by the Chief Minister from the UK DTI which I felt was a fob-off, so that should send platinum alarm bells ringing in the Chief Minister's office and loud enough to smash the windows. All we got was a letter which can be best described as an insult to this Island, its Government and Tynwald, and in my opinion Eire got the same message: basically 'Get lost'.

A press report from the *Guardian* on 10th January of this year highlighted comments by an expert in the nuclear field giving evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee, Dr Gordon Thompson, Executive Director of the Institute of Resource and Security Studies in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I quote: 'A terrorist attack on Sellafield could render the north of England uninhabitable and release 100 times more radioactivity produced by the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986.' He says the most vulnerable part of the facilities at Sellafield, dating back to the 1950s, are the giant tanks of high-level radioactive waste. He agreed that they have to be constantly cooled and stirred to prevent a chain reaction. Documents from both the nuclear industry and the government showed neither had ever attempted a thorough analysis of the threat or options for reducing it. He went on to state that the holding tanks were above the ground and designed in the 1950s and could not withstand an attack by an airliner. He went on to say that the tanks did contain 100 times more the same radioactive substance which was the main cause of off-site radiation exposure from the Chernobyl accident. I would just like to draw to hon. members' attention that that was put forward as evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee; it is not the hon. member for North Douglas over-egging the issue.

In a further report by the *Observer* concerning the same completely inadequate storage facilities, it was stated, "Tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium are stored in insecure buildings that are not much more than a shed at the Sellafield Nuclear Reprocessing Plant" warned the government's own security experts. The two stores holding the 71 tonnes of highly toxic material on the site in Cumbria are unable to resist attack or' - more frighteningly, I thought - 'even a fire, they say. Government advisers recommend that a new secure store be built quickly. A fire or an explosion at the plant could send lethal plutonium clouds across most of Britain, Ireland and the Continent.' Just in case anyone has any doubt, we are directly in between the UK and Ireland and we do not even get a mention in that. The UK Government response: 'Sit tight and do nothing.' They are in a tight spot. The energy resource policy is in a shambles and protecting and rationalising jobs against millions of people. Sellafield is undoubtedly one of the biggest threats to this Island, as I have already said, Mr Speaker, and it is certainly an obvious disaster zone waiting to happen.

I think I have pulled out the expert comments for hon. members to illustrate that fact beyond any manner of doubt. This frightening concept is only a few miles away. We must continue to ensure the pressure is kept on in the interests of the safety of this community and the long-term future of our environment and public health. Bids through legal challenges have currently failed, allowing Sellafield and the British nuclear industry to continue polluting the

environment with long-lived radioactivity, in the process making the Irish Sea one of the most radioactive bodies of water in the world.

MOX will add to that radioactive burden. The increased deliveries to the plant will present further radiological targets for the terrorist, such as a cargo ship carrying nuclear waste for processing. The opening of the MOX plant at Sellafield is an extremely arrogant action. It defies logic; it defies reason; it defies the laws of natural justice. It is morally wrong to pollute the environment, but when that environment forms part of another jurisdiction, I can only describe it as a form of selfishness that knows no bounds and one that recognises no boundaries. I could not put that any better myself, Mr Speaker, and that was a quote by the Irish Minister of State, Joe Jacob, who was quoted on this morning's news.

Finishing off then, Mr Speaker, and quoting from the *Irish Times*, 'The global nuclear watchdog body, the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, finally admitted after much political pressure worldwide, including in the European Parliament, that nuclear terrorism posed a much bigger threat than it had considered possible. In the US, overflying of nuclear plants has been banned and the transport of nuclear waste has been halted, yet the Blair Cabinet in London has virtually invited terrorists worldwide to go nuclear. The centre of this insanity is Sellafield, from where hundreds of shipments of deadly nuclear explosive plutonium are about to be sent thousands of miles across high seas. We are now in danger of radiological sabotage. According to a European Parliament study released this week into reprocessing and nuclear waste storage at Sellafield and the French equivalent at Cap de la Hague, an accident or an act of malice, such as what happened in New York at the World Trade Centre, if directed at Europe's two plutonium processing plants in the UK and France, would have consequences worse than Chernobyl. They are the two EU sites with the largest radioactive inventories. These plutonium factories are unparalleled worldwide and much more toxic than the average nuclear power plant.' There was uproar in France over their version of Sellafield, Cap de la Hague, and it is now protected by missile batteries.

My final thought, Mr Speaker: once you have something which is radioactive, it is with us for hundreds and thousands of years, as we have heard, and accumulating from the daily fresh pollution laid over the original, building up and building up in the environment, in the animals and in us. More nuclear power stations mean more spent fuel to process at Sellafield and more pollution pumped into the Irish Sea and our environment and places this Island under a greater threat than it already is. Now, Mr Speaker, what will hon. members do with this motion?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Corkill, the Chief Minister.

Mr Corkill: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I find this motion on the order paper today interesting and potentially very useful from the Isle of Man government policy point of view, and I would like to thank the hon. member for tabling it on today's paper and taking the opportunity, whilst we have got a lack of legislation coming through - which, can I say, Mr Speaker, will be rectified; there are some Bills for us to deliberate upon quite shortly.

As the hon. member who moved the motion, Mr Singer, has said, part (1) of the motion is really confirming what we already have in terms of policy and so my comments really will not relate to that number (1) very much, because certainly the Council of Ministers agrees entirely with what is stated and it is useful in a public forum for the hon. member to restate that item, because that gives us more power to our elbow when we are negotiating with the United Kingdom authorities. So, hopefully, part (1) is straightforward; it is something that has been a policy of Tynwald in another place for some years now. As I have said, it will help us, I think, 'up the anti', as it were, with the United Kingdom Government.

Coming to part (2) of the motion, I do have an amendment which is being circulated in my name and which I believe is a slight amendment. As the hon. mover said, in an answer to, I

believe, his question, I said that we did not have a stated policy with regard to nuclear electricity generation, and that, I believe, is a gap in the government policy which needs to be cleared up, because obviously, by the very fact that we are debating this issue today, it is a subject which we should have a view on. We have a long-term view on Sellafield and I think it is a pretty unanimous view; we do have degrees of unanimity, but I very rarely hear anyone speaking against the state of policy on Sellafield. So I am circulating this amendment and I do hope it will be successful, because I believe that it is a more realistic view of the position of the Isle of Man in relation to Sellafield.

I wish to say before I do move the amendment that the Minister for the Department of Local Government and the Environment, the hon. Mrs Crowe, does actually very much regret being absent from the House today for this debate, because, as members may be aware, she has been representing the Island's interests at the British-Irish Council, the Environment Sectoral Group which has been meeting in Edinburgh just yesterday. So that is why the amendment is in my name and not the minister responsible for environmental issues.

Can I say, Mr Speaker, the Isle of Man Government does take, I believe, every opportunity open to it to lobby and to press for dialogue at all levels so that our point of view is heard as much as is possible, and recently I reported on my visit to the Lord Chancellor, where I raised the issues and concerns about safety from terrorist attack at Sellafield, and I too, like the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson, regarded the original letter that we got as a fob-off. It has no content of any material benefit to us as a community or to any community, but I would make the point that, regarding safety at Sellafield - and perhaps the people of the United Kingdom have not woken up to this as much as we have - there is an issue of safety for the greater part of the northern part of the United Kingdom, and their interests are very similar to ours, I believe, with regard to the threat of terrorist attack and, as I did say, we have pushed the Lord Chancellor for further reassurances on safety and he has agreed to come back to us on that issue and I await his answer with interest.

The other point that was mentioned, admittedly only briefly, with the Lord Chancellor was the matter of recent UK and EU policy shifts and decisions on nuclear generation of electricity; they were touched on. So a motion passed by this House is very helpful in keeping the pressure on, although my amendment changes a few words in the second part of the motion, and I do hope members will be able to support that because we are all concerned about risks and it is really, I think, how best we make an impact.

In terms of issues that I think should be on record, in our efforts to determine a policy in this area of nuclear generation, I think in terms of the motion the second part of it actually does not really have that much relevance to Sellafield itself because, even if nuclear waste reprocessing stopped tomorrow, the accumulated material which hon. members have referred to already and the facilities at Sellafield are not going to go away, they will remain for many centuries and they will continue to be a source of risk and contamination to the area, and this is what of course we all regret. So stopping new nuclear plants, I do not believe, will actually remove the threat at Sellafield.

Now, having said that, my amendment to the motion does not change the nature of the opinion with regard to nuclear power reactors because it expresses an opinion.

Another point I would like to make is that - we have talked a lot about the United Kingdom - it is not the only source of material that goes to Sellafield. Much of it does come from abroad and it will continue to be shipped in, so again I would say the motion does not necessarily dry up the source of raw material for Sellafield -

Mr Henderson: Shut it.

Mr Corkill: - and of course what as an Island we do not like is reprocessing. Now, the alternative to reprocessing is storage; there is not another alternative that I am aware of, and I believe that this is where we have to keep the Island's resources focused on the issue of this expansion of reprocessing at Sellafield.

Now, other issues, I think, should be on the record. I have already mentioned about new policy; by taking a stance on nuclear power generation we are effectively taking a new stance and I am sure this is what the hon. member is trying to create. The issue, of course, from the United Kingdom perspective is an internal energy policy; it is a matter for the United Kingdom to consider their internal energy policy, and I would make the point in political terms - I am not saying we should not do this but I am making the point - that in political terms, if the House of Commons started to pass declaratory resolutions about our internal policies, we would probably tell them to mind their own business. Now, certainly I do not intend, Mr Quine, member for Ayre, to doff my cap to anyone from the other adjacent islands. There are strategic reasons why the United Kingdom wants a mixed portfolio of energy resources, and I am talking about the United Kingdom policy because we have heard the Isle of Man's side of the argument, but I think we also ought to do justice and hear what they have to say.

They do not want to be over-dependent on one source and I would say that they do actually have a legitimate right to make that choice, because we have done that on the Island, if we think about it, in terms of diversification of our electricity generation policy with gas coming ashore, with the fact that we generate with diesel still and of course we have the cable and it has been mentioned; do we know whether we have nuclear power coming through that cable or do we not? Now, I do not know the answer to that properly today, but I suspect an element of it might come from nuclear generation, and the hon. member said 'Well, with regard to nuclear generation, that is not the issue, whether we actually use it or not. It is a matter of the danger of the impact of generation itself' and I would agree with those comments, but if we are to make a political stance to the United Kingdom in a firm way, then I would suggest we need to have firm foundations and not allow ourselves to be accused of hypocrisy. Now, it may be that there is not a hypocritical argument there. We may use little or no nuclear power through that cable, but it is an issue that I know has been raised by one or two members in Tynwald, but we have passively, I suppose, accepted that type of power into the consumers' homes of this Island through the cable. We have imported it, and perhaps we should have had this debate before we did that, but we did not. Now, obviously we have got gas as well coming on the line and that is good, and there are the issues of wind and tide, which of course in our location we should strive to use more of, and I believe we have obligations under conventions to do that.

So if you look at it from the United Kingdom perspective, which I do not particularly want to, but I think we have to appreciate that they do have a perspective, nuclear-generated electricity cannot be totally discounted. I do not believe it can.

Mr Cannan: It is in the grid.

Mr Corkill: Now, I believe we need to be careful in all of this debate today that we do not actually also prejudice in some way the credibility of our current stance on Sellafield, because I believe, over the last few years, the Department of Local Government and the politicians on that department and on the current department have actually, in association and employing the strength of the situation in the Republic of Ireland, been growing our case quite successfully in terms of credibility and stance, and I certainly would not want to do something today which perhaps takes the focus away, even for a short period of time, and risk prejudicing the credibility of our stance on Sellafield, which is growing. I think our momentum in that area is growing and I certainly wish, in my position as Chief Minister of the Isle of Man

Government, to promote that stance and be stronger on that stance as we get the ability to do it, and our association with the Irish Republic is very critical in that process.

Now, I have circulated the amendment in my name, and if I just come to a conclusion with my remarks, certainly I will be very interested in what members have to say. Certainly on a couple of issues recently, such as the policy debate and residency, I am still struggling to get some feedback from members, because of situations that have arisen that are beyond my control. We have a gap in the Isle of Man government policy about nuclear generation; therefore all the comments that we hear today are very useful in formulating that, because we are in the budget process at the moment, but before the ink is dry on that we will be getting into the issue of the policy round, and if you look at the policy document at the moment there is not a lot of reference, really, in terms of the total percentage of the document, to Sellafield and to these sorts of issues, environmental concerns. There are references to it, but certainly I would hope this year to see an expanded section as to what we feel that we are comfortable with.

The amendment in my name deletes the words in the motion on the order paper 'opposition to'. As I say, part (1) is agreed by the Council of Ministers, part (2) expresses its concern at the commissioning of any further civil nuclear power reactors in the United Kingdom and wishes that these views should be reiterated to the United Kingdom government immediately because they have been raised, albeit, briefly with the Lord Chancellor, the fact that policy has been changing. Now, my concern at leaving the motion as it is to say 'opposition to' really makes a very firm statement, which I am sure the hon. mover is wishing to make, and I could see it leading to a question of whether we are going to go into a situation of opposing planning for every single nuclear electricity generating facility that may be applied for anywhere in the United Kingdom. I do not think we are, because I go back to the point of resource: we are small and we do struggle for resource, and I think we need to keep focused on Sellafield, acknowledge that there are these policy changes and certainly we can 'express our concern at the commissioning of any further civil nuclear power reactors' and, as I said, the motion in my name says 'reiterate to the UK government immediately' because it has already been stated.

That, I think, is a minor amendment. There was the possibility, I suppose, also of moving standing orders to vote on the two issues separately. I do not think there is a need to do that because, certainly from the Council of Ministers' point of view, this motion does most of what we would want to do, except that really we are concerned at these words 'expresses its opposition to' because we do not know enough detail, I would suggest, about the UK power. Now, the hon. member has said that since I answered that question things have moved on and there is talk of identifying sites for nuclear power generating facilities, but we do not have that detail yet and so to actually oppose something that we do not know the detail of beforehand I think is slightly premature and would probably weaken our case, and certainly I want to stay focused on Sellafield and I am committed to staying focused on Sellafield. I have spoken about it quite a lot since I have been appointed and I intend to not go quiet on it, because certainly until the terrorist attack on September 11th, who really debated the issue of Sellafield in the last five years? I cannot really remember very much being said. There were two or three, but certainly I want the profile higher and I would thank the hon. member, subject to this amendment, for allowing government to raise the profile. Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to move:

In clause (2) -

- (i) delete the words 'opposition to' and substitute the words 'concern at' and*
- (ii) delete the word 'expressed' and substitute the word 're-iterated'*

The Speaker: Hon. member for Garff, Mr Rodan.

Mr Rodan: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to second the amendment. I suppose, if one was being cynical, one could speculate as to whether the UK Government would take notice of whether we are expressing opposition or concern, but I support the amendment on the basis really that reflects a contribution on the part of the Isle of Man to the debate that is actually realistic. There is a wide debate going on in the western world over the merits of nuclear power and, not least, the problem of disposal of the long-term waste that was a by-product of nuclear power generation, and that debate has been going on and off since 1956 when the first nuclear power station was opened at Calder Hall. So it has been conducted on a wide front and it would be easy from the position of the Isle of Man to believe that the Irish Sea is an area particularly at risk, either from the terrorist situation, as quite rightly forming part of this debate, or the broader issue of safety of nuclear installations and power generation, because I do not believe, actually, that we are at any higher risk than the bulk of the population of the UK. When you consider the English Channel, for example, you have a nuclear lake fringed by dozens of French nuclear power stations, as well as Cap de la Hague that has been referred to, and into that nuclear lake are the busiest shipping lanes in the world, commercial and pleasure, maritime traffic back and forth, and in terms of risk assessment it is arguable that the populations of the south of England and north of France are immeasurably at higher risk than we are, which is not to negate. . . I mean, a risk is a risk and we are right to be concerned from our perspective, (**Mr Henderson:** Hear, hear.) and I, therefore, likewise welcome the debate taking place.

But we have to have an element of realism as well. Twenty-five per cent of the UK's electricity is nuclear-generated, that is a fact. In the case of France, of course, it is two thirds, and they export not only to their neighbours in Germany and Belgium and Spain, but of course, through sea cable, into the UK national grid and our sea cable in the Irish Sea connects into the UK national grid and we are, by definition, taking UK-generated nuclear electricity, and French. Therefore this perhaps puts into perspective what is going on and therefore we have to be careful to avoid accusations, right or wrong, of hypocrisy on our part in taking the argument about nuclear power.

Now, we have to accept, I think, that the UK Government apparently believes that the future lies to a large extent on nuclear power, and that is something that members have highlighted, and we are right to be concerned about that because does that down-play the possibility of alternative sources of energy? I think we have to accept that wind and solar generated power will not on their own provide the dependable and competitive source of electricity that, like it or not, nuclear electricity is at the moment. The trouble with wind power is that the wind blows the wrong way, two thirds of the time, to be useful - either too strongly where it cannot be usefully harnessed or too gently, and therefore you need large storage facilities in the case of wind power, which renders the exercise uneconomic at this time. Now, this is why I say that nuclear power, like it or not, is a reality and is likely to be so. That should not prevent us here contributing, though, to the debate and highlighting the concerns over the long-term storage issues that are the consequence of nuclear power.

So I welcome the debate. I am sure other members wish to speak, Mr Speaker, and I am pleased to second this amendment.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

Mrs Hannan: Thank you, Vainstyr Loayreyder. I did have some comments to make, but if I could just start off by replying, really, to the Chief Minister, he said we should not interfere with another country, and another country would not like it if we interfered with them. Could I remind the Chief Minister that a Kyoto agreement was entered into regarding worldwide emissions, which are cross-boundary. It is not one country accepting and another country not. We all know that America has now pulled out, but it was a different régime that was there at

the time that it was entered into and was supposedly progressed, but that is one instance where cross-boundary agreements have taken place, and therefore I do not see there is any reason why we cannot express our opposition to the further commissioning of civil nuclear power stations because, as the Chief Minister quite rightly said, we do not have a policy on it. So how can we be concerned at and reiterate something that we have not been concerned and reiterated about in the past? The point is that we had this policy, which is number (1), that reaffirms government policy to seek closure of Sellafield. That goes without saying and the Chief Minister has said that, yes, the Council of Ministers are happy with that, but when you go on and say there is no policy on the rest of it, but then amend it to say that we are going to reiterate something that we have not reiterated in the past, then I take exception to the movement of this amendment before us today.

I believe that we have quite legitimate concerns with regard to being opposed to what is going on at Sellafield. If I could remind members that it started in about the 1940s, the expansion of that particular site; it was an armament factory at the time, it was a secret place, it started off developing this nuclear life, which has continued. It does not have planning approval. It has all sorts of reasons why it is there, not for the goodness of our health, or for the goodness of anyone else; it is because it was a secret process that was going on and it has continued. Yes, in recent times there has been planning given for whatever is going on there, but it is not in our best interests to continue to reprocess, to continue the experiment that was going on in the 1950s, throwing out as much radioactive waste as possible into the Irish Sea just to see what happened and where it went to. We all know where it went to because it came out of Sellafield, it did affect us and it also went north. It goes to all the Nordic countries, it comes back down, round the British Isles, through the Channel and back up again. We know that because these DNA or whatever it is, genes and whatever, can be traced and so we know that. It has taken on a life of its own and, as the member for Ramsey and the member for Douglas North have quite eloquently expressed this morning, it does affect us, it builds up this life of plutonium which is something which we cannot recognise, and yet the UK are storing this and they are storing it and they are storing it. If they are reprocessing it they are even creating a bigger problem for the world, not just for us, because they are recreating plutonium to go into these nuclear power stations which will then come back again, and they come back not only to Sellafield, but also Cap de la Hague. It is quite close to us, really, when you think of about it; it is only up the Channel. So these are areas which I feel are quite legitimate concerns that we should be expressing today, and maybe we should have expressed them before. I sat in this House in the Tynwald public gallery when it was debated before and I can tell you that the feeling of people then, in 1986, it would be, was of real positiveness because a huge number of people had expressed concern prior to that in the 1970s, when we got to the extent of a public inquiry and all of the issues that built up round about that time which actually came about through public pressure. Some of the emissions and effluents that were coming out of the stack were then reduced to the lowest possible level allowing it to continue, but until that time it was spewing it out. It is public pressure, it is pressure from the likes of us, and I know at the time people did not like to be included with these awful people such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, but it was people like that, and our government and the Irish Government, which actually formed the opposition to Windscale and put some sort of rick on it. We all know that since that time in 1986, we had the Chernobyl cross-boundary contamination, so this is not just something that affects us and the Irish Sea; it affects the whole of the world how this contamination takes place.

The Chief Minister also went on to say, 'Look at it from their point of view.' I would say, why must we look at it from their point of view when we are looking at it from our point of view, sat here, contaminated, security problems and all the rest of it? The point of view would seem that we are doffing our caps and tugging our forelocks, and I think that we should move away from that and put our point of view, and I see our point of view as being point (2) of the motion

before us, which should not be amended, because I think that that we should be expressing our opposition to continuing the commissioning of any further nuclear power reactors in the United Kingdom and wish these views to be expressed to the United Kingdom government immediately. It is all very well writing and saying, 'We have expressed these before' and they will say, 'Where have you expressed them before?' We are expressing them today. It is up to us, Vainstyr Loayreyder, to look after the interests of the Manx people, not the British people.

If I could just comment on another couple of issues, the Minister for Local Government and the Environment said this morning on the radio about nuclear power being green, and I would refute that totally (**Mr Henderson:** Hear, hear.) because it does not add to global warming - and that is what Kyoto was about, the agreement; it does add to radioactivity in and around our world. We have got enough without adding to it. We also have not only Sellafield but round the coast of the British Isles and also the Welsh plants as well, and I know the people in Wales are extremely concerned about the contamination that goes on there and the danger to its people.

Vainstyr Loayreyder, I will end there but I would just reiterate by saying that, as we have no policy, point (2) of the motion before us is the motion that should be supported and I do not believe that the motion should be amended. Thank you, Vainstyr Loayreyder.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas West, Mr Downie.

Mr Downie: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think it has been an interesting and worthwhile debate and I applaud the hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer's opportunity to introduce this. It is obviously an area where there is some interest. But if you look at the global picture, one of the problems that I think we have to face, through no fault of our own, is that in order to get round these promises that were made regarding Kyoto and the real convention by the world's biggest nations and including America who have decided now that it is total folly and they cannot comply with the principles enshrined without costing their country an absolute fortune, on the back of that, of course, European policy now is to construct more nuclear power stations, and that gives them the opportunity of linking themselves to what they consider to be a greener form of energy but based on the information that it does not produce greenhouse gases or emissions and there is compliance in the reduction of that particular type of emission. But, in fairness, things have moved on now. There have been a lot of advances made in the nuclear industry, there is no doubt about that. If you actually talk to the marine laboratory in Port Erin there are less emissions coming into the Irish Sea now than there have been for a number of years and the situation has actually improved, but, saying that, in my view any emission of this nature is totally unacceptable.

Now, one of the problems that we have with BNFL and the operation of the Sellafield site is that it is probably the only site of its type in the country that is capable of dealing with the spent fuel from the reactors, dealing with spent uranium, and that system that is in operation there. . . And because the UK have been leaders in that form of technology, we also see spent fuel resources arriving there from Japan by sea, from Germany, various parts of the world, various countries in the world, and there is no doubt in my mind that every time one of these vessels comes into the Irish Sea carrying depleted fuel rods and so on, there is a risk. There is a risk with any maritime operation, any transport operation. I mean, I would extend Mr Singer's argument even further. If you say we are at risk in Sellafield with a terrorist attack, what would have happened if the Lockerbie disaster had been a bit closer to the coast and that aircraft could have fallen on Sellafield? So for somebody to say the risk is only there very infrequently - I would say that that risk is there permanently and our view, I think, is that we should seek the early closure of Sellafield on safety grounds.

I would like to take issue with some of the people who have contributed to the debate. There are a lot of good things that have come out of the atomic energy world, and we should

not lose sight of that. The hon. member here chuckles and laughs but I do not know whether he and medicine wants to go back to the leeches, but all the developments dealing with the cure for cancer, leukaemia and other major fatal illnesses have been brought in on the back of the atomic energy business, and in fact one of the best laboratories in the country is one operated by BNFL in Woolston in Warrington where all of these isotopes and things have been developed - the treatments for cancer, the various types of radium therapy, the new generation of scans that we are seeing now, so it is not all bad. The problem as I see it is this inability to deal with the spent fuel and the proper form of reprocessing. The principle is great. It is what it leaves in its wake, I think, is where the big problem lies.

On the second part of Mr Singer's motion, where he says he expresses his opposition to the commissioning of any further civil nuclear power reactors, having looked at that, some hon. members may not be aware but weapons-grade plutonium is not manufactured in a civil nuclear power reactor; it is manufactured under a completely different process and in fact there are only two establishments in the UK that have received licences to manufacture this material. They are operated by the MOD and, until fairly recently, Sellafield was one of those sites. Now, the MOD are out of Sellafield altogether now and they have moved somewhere else. I am not sure where they have moved to and I do not really want to know because it would worry me, but that is the situation as exists. Also BNFL and Sellafield are also involved in a massive clean-up involving Dounreay, which has been an environmental disaster. That is going to cost hundreds of millions of pounds to clear up that site and, reading an article the other day about British technology, I noticed that BNFL have now successfully been awarded a contract to clear up some of the problems up in the White Sea. They have been given the decommissioning of certain nuclear warships that were formally owned by the Russian Navy and were beached in that area, so over the next few years there is going to be a lot more traffic coming into Sellafield operation. So I think it is quite right that we express our concern.

Now, the reason why I think that amendment should be supported is that we are not in a position to express our opposition. We are not privy to any planning application for any further development of a site in the UK, neither is the Irish Government, but I think, if you want to get your message over, you have got to continue down this line and get your message across and try to bring about an early closure of Sellafield.

The electricity issue is quite an interesting one. As members know, there is a nuclear power station at Heysham; the one in Anglesey is Wylfa and I have no doubt that quite a substantial amount of electricity that comes to the Island through the cable will either pass through the areas that are supplied by the national grid from those two power stations and indeed, with the implementation of the new cabling system from Europe to the UK, we are probably receiving a substantial amount of our energy requirements from nuclear sources. I do not think you can get away with that. I think the medical argument is the same one. Why cut your nose off to spite your face?

Our problem, I think, is Sellafield. We do not like what is going on at Sellafield. We have to accept that technology will make more available regarding generation of electricity and the nuclear involvement in medicine, I think, is much to be applauded but it is the end-product that we are afraid of, the reprocessing and all these storage facilities which really are in place but waiting for a solution. We have got an industry which is operating at the moment, but there is no real tried and tested way of disposing of the waste so, if we bear that in mind, I think we cannot go wrong.

I will support the amendment; I think that is the way forward, and I fully support the first clause, which seeks the early closure of Sellafield on safety and security grounds.

The Speaker: Right, hon. members, we will now stand adjourned until 2.30 this afternoon.

The House adjourned at 12.58 p.m.

Sellafield — Nuclear Power Reactors — Opposition to — Debate Concluded — Motion Carried

The Speaker: Right, hon. members, we are on item 21. I had an indication from one member who has now indicated that they do not wish to speak. So, just to give members an opportunity, if any member wishes to speak before we wind up on this. . .? If not, I call on Mr Corkill, member for Onchan, Chief Minister, to respond to his amendment, please.

Mr Corkill: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was expecting one or two members just to speak and I was ready to listen to the rest of their comments. Can I say that this amendment is not designed in any way to undermine the feelings and the sentiment and the pressure that this Island wants to apply on the issue of Sellafield. In fact this government, this administration, wants to increase the impact that we have had in recent years and I feel that we can do that. It is designed at improving the credibility of the argument.

It was mentioned earlier that the fact that the Island uses nuclear power generated electricity could be separated from the argument about how it is generated and the impact on the environment of that issue. I agree with that entirely. The point I was making with my amendment is that we have to convince other jurisdictions in an effective way to change their policies and to have an impact on the way they formulate their policies, and I just do not believe that on a broad front we will have the same amount of impact with the resources at our disposal, and it is the practicalities of how we go forward that are uppermost in my mind in amending this motion. The way this is drafted, we have done it, I believe, in a way which does not dilute the impact of the sentiment that is behind it; it does not dilute the arguments at all but it will actually give us, in our negotiations with the United Kingdom Government in years ahead, a better platform.

I do not wish to prolong the debate. This is a declaratory resolution. I am asking hon. members, in supporting the amendment, to give the Isle of Man Government an effective platform for the future, and that really is the sum of why we have amended this. We agree with part (1) unequivocally; part (2) we agree with all but this fact of whether we oppose or we express our concerns. That is the issue before us and I would ask hon. members to support the amendment.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer, to reply to the debate.

Mr Singer: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Can I first of all take the opportunity of thanking all those who have taken part. Actually I think it has been a very interesting debate and certainly views have been expressed on which I think basically, as the Chief Minister has said, we are all in agreement, but there are ways of being more positive and more negative and I think that is the difference between my proposal and the Chief Minister's amendment.

I would like to thank Mr Henderson for seconding and for his support to me as well in putting down this motion. Certainly he has done a great amount of research, and I think one of the main points that he made was that the term 'safe nuclear reprocessing' is an anathema; it is just not possible and it basically, in the foreseeable future, will not be possible.

The Chief Minister - I was very pleased to hear him say that he thought that this discussion was very useful from the Isle of Man Government's point of view and that he accepts that we are all concerned about the risks. But if I could turn to what I think he termed a realistic view, in my way of thinking and the way he is putting it over, taking the realistic view means compromising your principles, watering them down. This resolution is about strong principles. The EU policy has been shifting but it is there, and I will refer to, later on, the effects of the EU policy as regards the Isle of Man and as regards Great Britain. The fact is that new nuclear plants guarantee Sellafield business, new nuclear plants will keep Sellafield viable, and it is also a fact that whatever they do in the MOX plant the processing of that waste, it does

not make it totally inert as far as I understand. So I explained why we should state that this is our new policy. We are not commenting on how the UK produce their energy but we are commenting on the potential disastrous effects it can have on the Isle of Man because of the lack of safety and the risk, and I do not think that is hypocritical. I also do not think it is hypocritical to present the fact that we are getting nuclear power. I do not think we have any choice if there is 25 per cent of nuclear power coming to the Island in a cable; we have no choice on that, but the fact was originally the UK Government were due to phase out nuclear energy by 2050. It is not so now. But also, they cannot use the argument that if they do not build any new nuclear stations we are going to be having a great problem for energy, because those present nuclear stations that are there now, the old ones, are being phased out gradually, so we are not going to get a sudden cut-off and they are going to be 25 per cent short of nuclear power.

I found it very interesting to read the comments of the hon. member Mrs Crowe, who is not here today, when she brought to her friend, Michael Meacher, the information - I am sure he was interested - that we have radioactive lobsters. That does sound on its own and can be looked at as being quite amusing, but in fact it is not amusing, is it? - the fact that the sea life around our shores is radioactive and that radioactive material in those is being ingested and it comes back to the argument I gave in the first place: that it is accumulative, you never get rid of it out of the body and you get a life cycle where it just builds up and builds up and it gets to a stage where it is positively dangerous. They know it causes cancer and the scientists themselves say that there is no safe limit of plutonium and such similar compounds in the body. They are dangerous.

We are looking for Irish Government support. We have got Irish Government support as far as Sellafield is concerned, that is fine, and it means we can still work with them on Sellafield, but that is no reason why we should not be extending our policy if we so feel, and they may well feel as the Irish Government that our opposition is valid due to the dangers that it can produce to their people, and perhaps they will then come behind us and say, 'Yes, we believe that that policy of opposing new nuclear plants in the UK is the right idea.' We may well get them on board with us. My concern is that the using of the word 'concern' in the amendment by the Chief Minister waters the whole thing down. The point is that we should be opposing it. It is a point - and I keep coming back to this - of principle that the policy is to oppose.

I was pleased that Mrs Hannan picked up the point on the use of the word 'reiterated' - very important, that word, because while we are reiterating our opposition to Sellafield, we cannot reiterate our view on a policy that we have not formed, and the Chief Minister said quite clearly in the brief that the government have no policy on new nuclear power stations.

Mr Rodan in his contribution said, 'Of course, there is no higher risk to us here than anyone in the United Kingdom.' That is not an argument. Do we have to accept high risk because the British Government find it acceptable to accept high risk for their population? Mr Rodan certainly did not mention our own future capacity with the gas-fired power station for us to be self-sufficient and hopefully not to have to use any energy from the United Kingdom (**Members:** Hear, hear.) and that will mean that we are not using any nuclear-produced energy. So I do not believe there is any hypocrisy in the argument that has been put forward today.

We have had talk about the French. Yes, the French are very laid back as far as nuclear energy production is concerned, but we have heard that they have taken it upon themselves to ensure that they protect, as much as they can, their nuclear power stations from attack, but whilst they are laid back the French people have a great opposition to any site for putting the waste material from these nuclear energy power stations. The French people have opposed it, but they also have nowhere, so they may well be laid back on the actual production of the

energy but it is no different to anywhere else: they do not want that waste material near them because they know that that waste material is dangerous almost forever and ever.

Mr Rodan also mentioned about wind power being uneconomic. It is uneconomic at this time because we have not done the proper research into it. If you go across to - and I know I have seen it - particularly some of the Spanish islands around Tenerife and that area, Lanzarote, they have wind power and that is producing a considerable amount of their energy needs, and if we, or the British Government, had invested money on these other forms of power, then I think we would have been much more advanced and would have had a much greater contribution to the electricity grid.

Mrs Hannan, I think, and Mr Rodan, commented on the Chief Minister and said that we would be interfering in other countries' responsibilities. The British Government have interfered in the United States' internal policy, and so have other countries, in criticising the United States for pulling out of the Kyoto agreement. I would say that it could be considered that our present policy of saying to the British Government we want to seek the closure of Sellafield could be said to be interfering in the internal politics of the United Kingdom, but in fact we have done it and we are continuing to do it and we are going to today hopefully reiterate our opposition, so what difference is it in saying to the British Government similarly that we do not believe that we should see the proliferation of nuclear power reactors because of the dangers? That is our policy just as much as we have the same opposition to Sellafield for the very same reasons.

Mr Downie commented on the European Parliament comments and that they had gone for it in Europe. In fact, the press release I have got here says 'Nuclear energies - Euro thumbs up', and I do not doubt that they have said this. They were actually adopting a report by a United Kingdom MEP on the European Commission's green paper on Energy Security of Supply, and the parliament has given a clear call for the present level of nuclear electricity production to be maintained in the EU, but it also says here that the parliament has said that they have to do a lot more research into new reactor designs that are safer and less costly. Now, it is quite clear that if they say it is safer they are not acknowledging at any time that they will ever be safe. What they are saying now is that they are not safe and they have got to try and be safer. That surely is not acceptable. The only way for a totally safe nuclear power reactor is not to have one at all. They also comment in this press release, the European Parliament, 'Nuclear waste storage is a problem and needs more research and greater efforts' so it is not, I would say, a wholesale acceptance of nuclear power production; what they are also saying is that the dangers at present are unacceptable.

Mr Downie also talked about the possibility - and it could have been a possibility - that the Lockerbie plane, instead of landing where it did, had landed on Sellafield, and that is quite true and that would have been an absolute disaster, but surely this is a point we should now be recognising (**Members:** Hear, hear.) that this can happen. A plane could land on Dounreay; it is all within the same sort of area. The only way is not to have these plants and not to put new plants in. I know we cannot just, say, close every plant; that is not feasible, but we should be looking to our future.

In regard to the Ministry of Defence facilities, I did take note of those which, of course, were on a much smaller scale, a much smaller operation, in using the words specifically 'civil nuclear power reactors' in the resolution. I would repeat that the proliferation of new nuclear power stations will prolong the life of Sellafield and, as the minister, Mr Downie, said, we do not like what is going on in Sellafield. Well, I certainly will not like what is going on at any nuclear plant because of the history of accident, of mismanagement and the proven case of continual leaks of radioactive material.

I think we can support (1) as a positive view but I think that (2) is also similarly positive and it does give, in fact, a full backing to the government in discussion with the UK Government, not to say, 'Oh, we are a bit concerned about it', but that we positively oppose it, we oppose the principle. The nuclear industry has been very dilatory in its attempts to ensure safety and it has been allowed to get away with it; to allow new plants without specific safe waste disposal is a recipe for a combination of circumstances to produce disaster. We surely had a parallel at the beginning of this month, albeit on a lower scale, where we had the flooding. We had a high tide; we knew we would have a high tide. What we did not know was that with that high tide we would have low pressure, and with that low pressure we would have a high wind, and the experts, both the weather forecasters and our DOT, could not predict what was going to happen because of the circumstances that occurred. That was not their fault. Now, similarly but on a much greater scale we could have such a disaster in a nuclear facility.

So I would hope that members would on a matter of principle not accept the amendment which I believe is watering down the whole idea of what we are trying to put forward as a policy of the Manx Government. I know the Isle of Man and I accept the Isle of Man cannot force immediate change in UK policy. I would not like to see the amendment pass because I believe it is watering down and to a certain extent it had been watered down so as not to offend the UK Government. That is not what we are doing here. We are seeking here to protect our people. Therefore I would ask members to vote for the motion on the paper and to stand up for our own principles. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Right, hon. members, we have a motion in the name of Mr Singer standing at item 21. To that we have an amendment in the name of the Chief Minister. I will put before you the amendment. All those in favour please say aye; against, no. The noes have it.

A division was called for and voting resulted as follows:

For: Messrs Cannan, Quayle, Rimington, Braidwood, Downie, Shimmin, Bell and Corkill - 8

Against: Messrs Anderson, Quine, Gill, Henderson, Duggan, Mrs Cannell, Mrs Hannan, Messrs Singer, Earnshaw and the Speaker - 10

The Speaker: Hon. members, the amendment fails with 8 votes for and 10 votes against.

I now put the motion which is on as item 21. All those in favour please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it.

A division was called for and voting resulted as follows:

For: Messrs Anderson, Cannan, Quine, Quayle, Rimington, Gill, Henderson, Duggan, Braidwood, Mrs Cannell, Messrs Downie, Shimmin, Mrs Hannan, Messrs Bell, Singer, Corkill, Earnshaw and the Speaker - 18

Against: None.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the motion carries with 18 votes for and no votes against.

Hon. members, that concludes the business of the House. The House will now stand adjourned until Tuesday 5th March at 10.00 a.m. in our own chamber.

The House adjourned at 2.53 p.m.