

reprocessing not only domestically, but by countries to which the United States ships uranium.

It is high time that this question was reopened. Safeguarding plutonium is important. Given that the element will not now disappear from the surface of the Earth, it is also a perpetual obligation. There seems no sensible alternative to a scheme whereby existing stocks (in weapons as well as non-weapons states) are physically transferred to some international stockpile where their integrity can be ensured. That notion, widely canvassed in the 1970s, should be revived. At the same time, governments (and the US government in particular) could help to take the edge off worries about bombs made with illicit plutonium by disclosing what they know about the purity of the plutonium required to make a bomb. The US nuclear explosion in 1961 of a device fashioned from 'reactor plutonium' was, in the event, carried out with material supplied by the British government from British reactors in exchange for enriched uranium. Given the design of the British reactors then operating, this material is likely to have been more concentrated in ^{239}Pu than that from oxide fuels. Saying so would be in everybody's interests.

What all this implies is that there are several steps that must be taken, by governments alone and in concert, if nuclear power is once more to be an accessible source of energy. Unsurprisingly, many of them require international arrangements that blunt the edge of national sovereignty. If nuclear power is potentially part of the means by which the threat of global warming will be avoided, who can protest that global conditions must be satisfied if the expectation is to become reality? Many, of course, will wring their hands at the prospect that meeting these conditions will entail an abridgement of national sovereignty. But they have no choice. The unique feature of the global warming business is that its global character enforces mutual interdependence, not only in the arrangements for making nuclear power usable, but also in making the emission of greenhouse gases in one state a proper concern of those who live elsewhere. But if the future requires that governments should put up with external scrutiny of their carbon-dioxide emissions, is it not even more important that they should allow that their nuclear plants should be supervised internationally, and that their plutonium should be stored in common repositories? The sooner that is recognized, the better for us all. □

History and the lotteries

Britain should not have bought the Churchill archives without ensuring that full use can be made of them.

The British National Lottery seems destined for a bumpy ride. After less than half a year, it has discovered that winners are ambivalent, to say the best of it, about the publicity attending their sudden conversion into millionaires, that the first sob stories have come to light about people who are so addicted to the new game that they spend all they have on

it, neglecting the necessities of life, and a scheme for providing gamblers with instant satisfaction (or despair) has been found easily corruptible. But is it not all in a good cause? For are not roughly half the proceeds of the lottery to be devoted to good causes — marking the impending millennium, preserving national monuments, assisting charitable causes (whose normal income has fallen drastically because of competition from the gambling machine)? Sadly, even that aspect of this plan is turning sour.

Last week, the body known as the Heritage Commission decided to spend some of its first lottery receipts on buying from the trustees of the family of Sir Winston Churchill, Britain's wartime prime minister, the paper archive left by the grand old man. By all accounts, the sum involved is £12.5 million. Hitherto, the archive has been lodged at Churchill College, Cambridge, where it has been carefully preserved and partially catalogued, mostly with the use of public money. By all accounts, a substantial part of the collection includes state documents, generated by Churchill during his long spell in public office. There has been a great fuss. Expectations that the purchase would seem apt just ahead of the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the Second World War in Europe have been disappointed. Winston Churchill's grandson, a Member of Parliament who carries the same names, has been accused of greed.

But this complaint, and its accuracy, is a sideshow except in that it illustrates that the financial imprudence engendered by gambling infects not only the gamblers but the beneficiaries. A much more serious issue stems from a little-noticed condition of the sale of the Churchill archive — the understanding that while the physical archive has been sold, copyright in the material it contains will continue to be vested in the family trustees. That is an iniquitous condition, if a fairly common one. It is standard practice, when people sell their papers to, say, a university library that they or their heirs retain the copyright. Up to a point the condition is justifiable. It would, for example, be unjust that a published work by an author could be republished by any publisher with the inclination simply because the manuscript is placed in a public archive. The iniquity in these arrangements is that unpublished writings enjoy a much stricter form of copyright protection: they cannot be published without the consent of the copyright owners, who may levy a charge.

That practice largely defeats the purpose of making archives public property. Scholars can spend days reading through old papers to form a view about some sequence of events, and then discover that the copyright owner will not let the evidence be published. Often, consent is withheld because the owners fear that an ancestor or other relative will be shown in a bad light. The law (everywhere applicable) does not require that copyright owners have a duty to history, which is proper when an archive is privately held. But that should not be the case when, as in the case of the Churchill papers, money has changed hands and the cost of conservation and access put on the shoulders of taxpayers. Those now complaining about the younger Churchill's gambling windfall would better direct their attention to this issue of principle. □