

Energy

been researched by the Research Council; the process has not been developed in practical terms even for individual farm use. It is certainly worthy of research, and indeed one member on this side of the House has been promoting this suggestions for years—it has fallen on deaf ears until tonight, and now it becomes a practical source of energy which the Atlantic area ought to consider.

There is no question that we should consider conservation. It is a must. But up to this moment there has been very little concrete policy to indicate that the government itself is promoting research in this direction. Have we researched a new carburetor? Have we researched a new motor? Have we researched anything in this field which has become commercially viable? Not to date.

In the speech we just heard, we were called gamblers. I would point out that the Atlantic area and New Brunswick in particular have gone far ahead of some of the ideas which have been presented today. We have tried nuclear power but we were delayed by red tape for years. We have tried to take advantage of the need to refine offshore oil but we were denied this opportunity as a result of National Energy Board policy which refused to allow the refining and processing to go to the Atlantic area.

● (2110)

I think it is high time that we took a solid look at the Atlantic area. We have been given a couple of little books lately. I have not read them word for word, but I have studied them and I have asked others about them. I am told that the Atlantic provinces are not mentioned by name in these books anywhere. I have in my hand a news release which followed the tabling of these books and their presentation for public consumption. The Atlantic provinces are not referred to as a problem area in this news release. One must assume that the Atlantic provinces, in the mind of the government today, have no energy problem. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We have a study by the government that indicates that we must have self-reliance. This means reducing the vulnerability of Canadians to arbitrary changes in prices or the supply of imported energy by using domestic resources to the greatest extent possible, and protecting against interruptions in the supply of energy we must import. And, Mr. Speaker, we must import energy in the east. According to the study, a strategy of self-reliance does not mean self-sufficiency at any price unless, I might add, Mr. Speaker, it is for the maritimes.

We are going to reduce net Canadian dependence on imported oil in 1985 to one third of our total oil demands. Economists are predicting that this target will bankrupt us before we reach 1985, not only in the Atlantic area but in Canada as a whole. The next 10 to 15 years are crucial for both the short-term and long-term energy future.

Let me examine the situation in the Atlantic area. For example, let me talk about our residential energy. I would ask the hon. member who has just taken his seat to take what I propose to say into consideration. He should take some lessons from the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) who, though I disagree with him philosophically, has objectives that are admirable and much preferable to those on your right, Mr. Speaker. He has made a study of his subject and he knows what he

[Mr. McCain.]

is talking about. He was a credit to himself and he spoke as a supporter of a total over-all policy for the good of all Canada. He was not accusing anyone; he was merely pointing out the problems.

While the east has been experiencing energy shortages that could have been anticipated, the Government of Canada has been saying that oil in Alberta belongs to Alberta, that oil in Saskatchewan belongs to Saskatchewan, but that oil lying offshore in the Atlantic area belongs to Canada. The manipulation of offshore permits for drilling has been such that drilling has been discouraged. Those who have had the courage to drill have had to apply both provincially and federally, not knowing the regulations that the federal government would impose. I submit that the search for and development of energy off our coasts has been set back by at least ten years as a result of negative and controversial policies. Ask some of the responsible premiers of the Atlantic area what their opinion is.

Mr. Breau: That is nonsense.

Mr. McCain: The hon. member had better check with some of his political friends down there.

Mr. Breau: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question.

Mr. McCain: Yes, when I am through. I should like to plead for one other position, Mr. Speaker, and it is this. The Atlantic premiers should at this time recognize the fact that, regardless of their political faith, their prime loyalty must be to the Atlantic area and to each other. The members of the Atlantic legislatures must recognize that in unity there is strength and in discord there is weakness. We have operated from a position of weakness for too many years. There are not many seats in the Atlantic area but there are enough to change a government. It is high time they recognized, as the west has already recognized, that there is no sympathy from those on your right, Mr. Speaker, for people in need anywhere in Canada, whether they be native people, maritimers or northerners. The needs of Quebec and Ontario are prime in the minds of those to Your Honour's right. The Atlantic premiers must recognize this and act as one. There have been too many quarrels among the premiers to have a united policy.

The Hon. Jugh John Flemming, a Conservative, started the maritime and Atlantic premiers get together. The next premier of New Brunswick practised politics and caused dissension to the point that unity could not be obtained among the premiers of the Atlantic area. He played politics with this crew of which the hon. member is a member and for which he must assume some blame.

We now find ourselves in the position where the Hon. Richard Hatfield, a Conservative, is pleading with the maritime premiers to take a united position, and the only thing interfering with that position is politics. It is becoming more and more obvious to maritimers at this time that the policies proposed and the united position won by Premier Richard Hatfield are indicative of the course they must follow if they are to survive remarks of the kind we have heard a moment ago which will, by the way, be widely read as Liberal policy in the Atlantic area. We will like that speech very much.