

*Renewable Energy*

**Mr. Schellenberger:** I hope so. The department has indicated that the regulations should be available to us soon. I sincerely hope that Canadians take advantage of them. In a policy paper published three years ago this party announced a policy which we were then very glad to see incorporated into the budget. It allowed personal tax credits to people, who use renewable technologies. It would have also offered accelerated five year write-offs for the cost of solar equipment, wind technologies, and biomass technologies, used in industrial and commercial buildings and in multiple residences.

We stated many other things that should be done. For instance, we should encourage municipalities not to tax people who use these new technologies in buildings. We should encourage mortgage and insurance companies to incorporate provisions for the use of these technologies into their mortgage contracts and insurance policies. We can think of many other areas where rapid use of renewable energies could be encouraged in the country.

In my bill I have outlined this as much as possible and as far as I can, having regard to the legal requirements of a private member's bill. I offer it to the House and hope it will be accepted so that the committee can use the bill as a basis on which to build a corporation and information disseminating device within government. I hope this will be done as rapidly as possible.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roy MacLaren (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, while regarding the hon. member's bill as being in some way redundant, as I shall explain in a moment, I should like to assure the House that we on this side welcome the occasion that he has provided to discuss an important and pressing topic, the use of renewable energies in Canada.

The hon. member has proposed a corporation which in some respects is similar to that to which the government already committed itself in the Speech from the Throne. I am sure the hon. member is aware that such a commitment has more recently been given substance. A corporation embodying some of the responsibilities envisaged in this bill is already in being. I nevertheless welcome his remarks about the various alternate forms of energy that can be developed in Canada and which can play a very real part in our energy future.

Perhaps it would be appropriate if I were to inform the House of some of the current policies and programs of the federal government in the development of renewable energy before turning to specific aspects of the hon. member's bill. I should say at once that the federal government considers the development of alternate forms of energy as a high priority. Indeed, I anticipate that in the new energy policy to be presented to the House next week, the hon. member will see further substantiation of that commitment.

Over the last seven years, the federal government has substantially increased its research and development efforts in renewable energy, from less than \$1 million in 1974 to just over \$20 million in fiscal year 1979-80. Since 1976, the

National Research Council has been the federal government's lead agent in its renewable energy activities. In this role it will continue to be an important actor in the federal government's renewable energy program, as the new alternate energy corporation comes into being. The research and development activities I refer to, as the hon. member noted, include solar energy, biomass, wind energy, geothermal energy, hydraulic energy and so on. Policy responsibility for research and development in these important resources resides, of course, with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. In 1977 the renewable energy resources branch was formed in the department, to begin the development of programs in renewable energy. Later, in 1978 a conservation and renewable energy branch was formed to deal with policy questions. This latter group has the leading role in the federal government for policies regarding the research, development, demonstration and commercialization of renewable sources of energy.

In July, 1978, the federal government announced a major new \$380 million initiative to develop renewable sources of energy. These programs related primarily to solar heating, forest biomass use, research and development in renewable energy, and federal-provincial demonstration agreements. These programs are now in place and I am pleased to say, are operating satisfactorily. As an example, the forest industry renewable energy program committed \$104 million for the period through 1985, to provide capital assistance to approved projects in the forest industry to displace fossil fuels with wood wastes. Projects which have been approved in many parts of Canada will displace fossil fuels equivalent to about three million barrels of oil per year. Some projects will displace imported oil at an estimated saving to the federal government at the current level of compensation of \$53 million in the first year after the approved projects are completed. Related spending by the private sector in Canada will be about \$105 million. This is just the beginning. The government has already stated a strong commitment to renewable energy. And the benefits, particularly in displacing imported oil, are now beginning to emerge.

Let me give you a specific example of how the government has committed itself to the development of renewable energy technology. I have in mind the example of solar heating. I should like to quote from an address given by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) to the Canadian Solar Industries Association on September 30, when he said:

We need a strong, growing and healthy solar industry, a solar industry that can produce a Canadian product for Canadian conditions. That was, and remains, the purpose of the federal government's purchase and use of solar heating program. I want to assure you this will continue to be an important mainstay in developing a short-term market for solar equipment.

The minister, of course, was referring to the federal government's \$125 million solar purchase program.

To demonstrate further the commitment of the federal government to develop solar heating technology and a Canadian solar industry, the minister announced, on September 30, a new federal government initiative. To accelerate the development of solar hot water technology, a new demonstration program involving a thousand units at an estimated cost of \$5