

industry, trade and commerce, encouraged several corporations to get together and not compete with one another building six world-scale plants for petrochemicals but to build three, and to build them one after the other, so in that way we would not bankrupt six operations but get two or three going in Canada. One at that time was in my own area of Sarnia-Lambton, the second one was anticipated at that time would take place in Alberta, and the third one in the city of Montreal.

That was a great example of government and industry getting together to meet a particular situation, realizing that while people are out working, pioneering in this field of renewable resources, we had to make the best and most effective use of the natural resources that we already have in place. World scale plants of the kind like Petrosar is a good case in point.

The hon. member also made the point that we should be looking beyond our own doors. We are not the only country that is faced with this phenomenon. We are a country that is blessed with natural resources, a country that probably does not face the same predicament or difficulty as others. Because others feel more of a panic situation, they are moving ahead and doing work and spending more money and focusing more attention on the renewable resource factor. Because they are doing that, we should take advantage of going to seminars, international conferences, we should be encouraging Canadian engineers and Canadian people to travel abroad, to go to these seminars to find out what is being done in this particular area by other countries, whose problem at the present time is obviously greater than Canada's but one that we cannot ignore.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain was correct when he said that the impetus for a lot of the government action, government money and government moves, was the sudden realization that we were faced with the two problems of a possible lack in security of supply and then we were apprehensive of what might happen to the world price, given the strength of the cartel represented by OPEC. On that basis, more focus, more money and more emphasis has certainly come by way of government, whether it be provincial or federal government.

● (1640)

The Canadian government's interest in the renewable energy field was demonstrated in 1974 with the establishment of a program of renewable energy research and development. A further major initiative in 1978 launched several new programs oriented toward industrial development in this particular area. More recently, I am advised, the 1980 National Energy Program emphasized the future role of renewable energy resources in providing for a stable and independent future. Criticism and hyperbole are often directed at the National Energy Program. The press and other media have a tendency to emphasize the negative, and it is easy to make a flamboyant and hyperbolic speech about the negative, but we

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tend to fail to glean many of the good things about the National Energy Program. At long last emphasis has been placed on one of them, when for too long it has been in the shadows.

One part of the National Energy Program says:

Canada is well endowed with non-renewable resources that can provide a bridge into a future where Canadians use less energy in their daily lives, and renewable energy plays a much larger role. Renewable energy in the form of hydroelectricity already contributes 24 per cent of Canada's energy. Other renewables contribute a share approximately equal to that of nuclear power . . . The realities of the energy future indicate the wisdom of accelerated efforts to develop new and renewable energy forms, to stand beside hydroelectricity as the basis for a sustained, clean, and economically viable energy structure.

The National Energy Program envisages a much greater role for renewable energy. The Government of Canada believes that economic realities now favour a range of renewable energy options. The National Energy Program will provide further incentives to the commercial use of these resources, both within the comprehensive off-oil effort already described, and in the form of special new or enriched programs. It will also provide increased funds for research development and demonstration of renewable energy.

I say to the pioneers who were in the field before we heard about shortages and before we heard about increases in oil prices that here again is an indication to them that the government is aware and is prepared to act and make money available.

I understand others wish to follow in this debate. I know my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans), has been interested in this subject for a long time. I know he will want to expand on it to some extent. I wanted to put forward more ideas, but I am sure the hon. member can aid and abet my efforts.

Mr. John Evans (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, indeed, I do wish to add to the comments made by my friend, the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen), with regard to renewable energy. I have been very interested in this matter for a substantial period of time. I was part of the group which had something to do with the beginnings of Canertech, which will be acting as a catalytic agent for renewable energy in the future. Quite frankly, I think it is underfunded, and we should be putting more money into it to develop renewable energy sources in the future because, as the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) indicated, we will not be able to depend on fossil fuels as our only source of energy in the twenty-first century. We will have to develop new forms of energy.

In the broad sense of the word, government—this government and the provincial governments—and, indeed, the private sector have narrowed the focus far too much in relation to renewable energy forms. According to some of the information available to us, I see that we are talking about renewable energy sources such as biomass, solar, wind, hydraulic, geothermal and others. However, one of the things that bothers me greatly is that a task force of this House of Commons worked for nearly a year on the question of alternative energies—not necessarily renewable, perhaps, but alternative energies—which might have great potential as replacements for fossil fuels and the existing fuels we have now including natural gas, petroleum products, hydroelectricity and other forms of energy which we all know so well. Yet when I hear