

have never been better, citizens across the country are looking for some direction, looking for a vision of the future. In a country which has not had a vision for nearly a decade, yet the government presents a budget which is disappointing to Canadians. That is a travesty.

**Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State, Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I am indeed very happy to be given this opportunity to contribute to the budget debate. It is a debate on a budget which is clearly of great importance to all Canadians. We in the government are confident that the implementation of the provisions of this budget will ensure both economic and energy security for Canadians in the years ahead.

The government faced an economic environment which saw unemployment and inflation at unacceptable levels, and a rate of growth in the economy which was dramatically reduced due to a worldwide economic slowdown in general, and an expanding U.S. recession in particular. In an effort to counteract these various pressures the federal government brought forward what has been referred to as an energy budget. It is a package that realistically attacks the problems of Canada's current economic malaise at its source. It abandons the short term solutions of the past for longer-term structural realignments.

In this regard I refer to the major initiatives with respect to the Canadianization of the oil and gas industry, and other energy-related initiatives, which will guarantee Canada's energy security and the place of individual Canadians and Canadian corporations in the energy field.

In a world economy increasingly dependent upon the stability of oil supplies, the emergence of Canadians as their own energy masters is fundamental. I know that it is far too obvious to the hon. members opposite that this budget is first and foremost a good budget for average Canadians. The howls of indignation from the members of the official opposition are ample evidence that we have succeeded where they have failed. I regret that the hon. member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) has left the chamber.

I had an opportunity over the weekend to speak to a great many average Canadians in my riding. They agreed with me that it was a good budget and were pleased that de-indexing did not take place, that RRSPs and, more important for those who wish at some time to own their own homes and save realistically for them, that the RHOSPs were also left in place.

A quick glance at the price components of the Crosbie budget of last December will indicate clearly that this government has the interests of low and medium-income Canadians very much in mind. During the term 1980-1984 there is a difference of over 60 cents in the price of a gallon of gasoline between our budget and that of the December Crosbie budget. The difference in the cost of home heating oil during the same period will amount to about 45 cents a gallon. The difference between our budget and the Crosbie budget in the figures on natural gas prices is a whopping \$3.30 per thousand cubic feet.

In 1980 a typical Canadian consumer will spend \$1,375 to heat his home with fuel oil and to purchase gasoline for his

car. This would cost \$3,700 in 1984 if domestic oil prices were at international levels. However, under the price schedule of the national energy program the cost will be \$2,520. That is \$1,180 less than the world price—clearly a real saving.

These savings can be significantly increased if consumers take advantage of the assistance offered under the national energy program to reduce their energy costs by switching from oil to some alternate source of energy such as electricity, natural gas, or other fuel. Not only will the consumer benefit from the federal government's conversion grant, which may be as high as \$800 with the federal government matching individual investment dollar for dollar, but the consumer will also benefit in the years that follow conversion from a reduction in energy costs.

Given the extent of savings on energy bills these expenditures are probably the best private investment opportunity in Canada. The pay-back will be quick, and the investment will continue to pay dividends in energy savings long into the future. I am sure if hon. members check with their constituency offices they will find out that requests for applications are pouring in.

To reinforce the conversion program the government is stipulating that no new residential unit built after July 1, 1981, will qualify for federal financial assistance or guarantees if it is heated by oil, unless no reasonable alternative is available. If the consumer takes advantage of the expanded Canadian Home Insulation Program under which the government will pay up to \$500 toward the cost of insulating a home, then savings will be even further increased.

In my own region of Nickel Belt we are making advances in our utilization of alternate energy technology. The provincial government's 12-storey office building in Sudbury has been designed for very low energy consumption in an area of quite rigorous climatic conditions. Some 56 solar collectors on the roof will provide about 35 per cent of the domestic water heating requirements of the building. This is particularly appropriate in light of Sudbury's reputation—and I say this with some pride—as being the sunshine capital of northern Ontario.

Canadian consumers will also benefit from the creation of a Canadian alternate energy corporation, Enertech Canada, that has been established to support the commercial production of renewable energy and conservation technologies. Enertech Canada will support the work of Canadian firms engaged in the development and commercialization of these technologies by entering joint ventures, making equity investments, and offering marketing assistance. Initially it will be set up as a subsidiary of Petro-Canada, but after that period it will become an independent Crown corporation.

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One option for conversion away from oil that is particularly important to me is that of wood, because in my region of northern Ontario wood does indeed play an important role. I might add that it has presented us with a major problem, that of the wood rustler, but that is a problem for the law. To be