

*Energy Conservation*

The Conserver Society was a notion that originated with the Science Council of Canada and was set down in our 1973 Report on National Resources Policy. We are proud of its authorship and are ready to argue its merit. It is not a concept of futurology and it is not "zero growth". Rather it embodies the central principle that Canadians must become more responsible than we are now about the use and conservation of our resources. We recognize that many critical materials are finite in supply and we seriously question the continuation of unrestricted consumption of them.

Further, as proponents of the Conserver Society, we appreciate that decisions so frequently made today in pursuit of short-term goals may incur serious, and perhaps unacceptable, long-term social costs which should be analyzed before they are accepted.

In our opinion, these views are practical, down-to-earth and relevant.

I feel that we can aptly demonstrate that something is being done. It may be slow, but all things of government are slow in this democratic process of which we are so proud. There is more to be done, and one of the things is to get the Canadian public to appreciate the changes that have to be made. For that reason I am very grateful for this debate today in that it enables us to do just that.

**Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North):** Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to participate in a debate that has energy as the key point, and I am pleased with the contributions made by hon. members on all sides of the House. The hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) is to be congratulated for moving this motion and for the kind of contribution he has made, thus setting the standard for the debate as exemplified by the speeches which have already been made.

Coming from the Maritime provinces I am pleased with this opportunity of speaking because I come from one of the areas in Canada where the energy resources of the nation are critical to the people not only today but in the days ahead.

All governments have endeavoured to react to the world situation as far as industry is concerned. Governments here and in many other areas in the world have not been able to react in the way we anticipated. As the last speaker suggested, this may be because this is a democratic country in which governments move much slower than we would hope, and certainly much slower than the governments of other countries involved, such as Russia, China, and others on this globe.

From an Atlantic provinces' point of view I must say it is absolutely essential that we obtain guarantees from the government that the artificial economic disparities that exist today are not going to worsen. Our experience has shown that this results in a much heavier burden being placed on the business community, particularly because of the higher cost energy we have today.

● (1740)

I think members of parliament should assume that the people are as lethargic in many ways as governments appear to be, and should set an example by telling the people we realize there are very complicated and difficult days ahead so far as energy resource development is concerned, and that we are endeavouring in whatever way we can to react to this in an effort to put in motion those schemes which will give a greater assurance to the people of the areas that will be affected by the high cost energy syndrome that exists in the world that they will be pro-

vided with energy in all forms required, at a cost which will allow the industries which exist to be attracted to the areas of regional disparity in a continuous way, so that we do not lose the forward momentum that has been developing recently to overcome some of our problems.

I should like to talk about two things in this regard. One relates to a national power grid. The second relates to the development of power from the Bay of Fundy tides. This is not something new or different. The Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Cullen) shakes his head. I am sure it is not because he does not agree with me. In his career he has been a strong supporter of Fundy tidal power.

I am determined to bring once again before this House the potential that is available from the tides of Fundy. I think it is very important for us to look at one of the many problems which face this nation so far as the conservation of energy is concerned and in guaranteeing to people in all parts of this nation that they will have access to resources which may be available only in some areas of the nation. In this regard I am speaking about a national power grid.

I wish to pay tribute to the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) who a long time ago, in 1959, made a speech in Kitimat, British Columbia, in which he put forward the guidelines that he believed should be followed to provide a national power grid. He gave the responsibility to the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) at that time to initiate discussions with the various governments in the country so that we might develop a national power grid. At that same time the then Prime Minister and that minister put into place an agreement with the Maritime provinces that produced an inter-connecting grid in that part of Canada which is of inestimable value so far as the power users of that area are concerned.

It is pleasing to note that the present government is now moving forward on that particular inter-connection so that it might be connected to Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador.

**An hon. Member:** It is about time.

**Mr. Coates:** Yes, I would have to agree that it is about time, but I am not arguing about things that are happening now. I am pleased that they are happening. I say thank God this is happening. This is vitally important to the Atlantic provinces. I would have liked to have seen it happen sooner.

I note that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Foster) not too long ago made a speech somewhere in this country which I was pleased to read, in which he spoke of a national power grid and the things that would have to be done so that it could come about. I should like to say to him I am pleased to see that he and members of his department have finally dusted off a great deal of the work done by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain to bring about a national power grid.

I must admit that this was not at that time as exciting a venture to some provinces, especially Ontario and Quebec, as it is today when they see a different situation than that which confronted them in 1963. I accept the fact that sometimes governments can move only as fast as the part-