

Renewable Energy

The object of the corporation and its directors was to find finances outside of government for the operations of the corporation and, in addition, that they not be reimbursed in their capacity as acting directors. I suspect there would be many people available in Canada to serve on such a corporation because of the interest which exists in renewable energy. As you are aware, there is a great need for this bill, which was pointed out in the debate which took place last week on the opposition motion dealing with energy.

As governments argue as to who will take what part of the energy dollar, we are finding Canadians are being faced with the reality that they are and will be depending more on foreign sources of oil and other forms of energy. I believe very strongly that we, as Canadians, must establish, as a national goal, energy self-sufficiency. Part of that goal must come from renewable energy because we have the ability and the technology to move much faster than we are at the present time toward more renewable energy, forming part of our heating plan, our movement of vehicles, transportation and so on. We are not moving quickly enough to that end.

Most of the encouragement we have received from government has come in the form of research and not enough in the area of practical application of that research. I will not spend a great deal of time on the reasoning and the need for rapid expansion in renewable energy because we have discussed these reasons repeatedly in this House. But Alberta, the province with most of the conventional oil in Canada, has only five billion barrels of conventional oil left and we are pumping approximately 450 million barrels out of that pool per year. Even though we have in our province the second largest pool of hydrocarbons in the world, we need new technology and rapid development with the present technology to meet our needs in the next ten years.

Even if the oil sands and the Cold Lake plant get off the ground—and I sincerely hope they do—we will still need an additional five plants of the same magnitude just to meet our needs to 1985. That has nothing to do with the expansion of demand which Canadians may seek. Some hon. members may say that we have Northern Natural Gas and Oil, Hibernia, Sable Island gas, and tremendous pools of natural gas in Alberta and British Columbia and if we put them in the marketplace we can reach that self-sufficiency goal. That may be true, but at the rate we are going now it could take a good many years before we can get those pools of resources into use by Canadians. So, in light of that background, I believe the national government must encourage Canadians to accept renewable energy at every opportunity because it is lasting, exciting, and something which will catch on quickly in the Canadian sphere. I believe the adoption of Bill C-210 would constitute a start in that area.

I am averse to the creation of another Crown corporation, but we need some way of gathering information and making it available to the Canadian people immediately. We also need protection for consumers because most of the hardware which is now available is imported.

One might ask why we should move quickly with renewables. One of the particular advantages of renewable energy is the fact it is not handicapped by geography. We can use the potatoes in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick to produce alcohol, we can use poplar trees in Quebec and northern Ontario to produce alcohol for vehicles. Solar heat is available in all provinces. Wind is available in most areas and we in the southern part of the prairies know how much energy it can produce for us. This is also true for the islands off Quebec. Heat pumps are another area of technology which is just getting started. Then there is geothermal energy under the foothills of Alberta and parts of British Columbia which can produce hydroelectric power at rates much lower than we can produce at the present time from our rivers, which have been our principal source of electricity in the past.

What I am saying is that natural renewable energy resources are everywhere in Canada and they are capable of being used by all Canadians if they receive the encouragement and information which should be at hand.

What steps should be taken in Canada? There is at present a complete lack of co-ordination between scientists, governments and others interested in obtaining information. There is no central source of information available other than the department, which is just getting started as an information disseminator. There is no agency responsible for testing new devices and inventions. Standards have not been established at the present time, so how are consumers to know when they buy a technology that it will be capable of performing under our winter conditions? Therefore no production, design or construction technologies are available immediately to people who ask for them.

As I say, there is no agency established to co-ordinate further research and development which will assure consumers that what they are buying will work. What I am seeking to do in Bill C-210 is to have Parliament give a commitment to gather this information and work out the standards which are so necessary.

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What I would also like to see in the bill are incentives, particularly in the form of tax incentives so that the people of Canada will move toward the use of this technology. When the cost of renewable technology is placed against the cost of natural gas and oil at its present value, the oil and natural gas win out in terms of price. They will not for much longer, and with a minor tax credit to Canadians we could quickly get a certain portion of them involved in renewable energies and increase the percentage of homes and buildings heated by this source.

Another key feature of Bill C-210 is outlined in clause 4(a). That section states that an object of the corporation is to propose design, production and construction standards for renewable energy. Because we are not sponsoring sufficient encouragement to small businesses in Canada so that they will get involved in the production of hardware for solar plants or wind technology, even though the National Research Council