

PREFACE

Chairing the Special Committee of the House of Commons on Alternative Energy and Oil Substitution has been an exciting and appealing challenge. The experience of working closely for many months with a small and dedicated group of Members of Parliament, supported by a competent professional staff, was particularly satisfying. Our mandate was one of the most complex and technical ever given a Committee of the House and it demanded months of intense study by the Members before they could state their conclusions and recommendations.

Our work we hope demonstrates that a group of Parliamentarians with various backgrounds, representing three political parties and possessing different degrees of knowledge about energy, is able to prepare a report which is comprehensive, credible and understandable to the Canadian public.

During the public hearings held in Ottawa and in each Province and Territory, Committee members had an opportunity to hear testimony from private citizens, interested groups, professional people, officials from corporations large and small, and government representatives. Furthermore, officials in a number of foreign countries welcomed our inquiries and opened their doors to us. We could not have completed our study without the cooperation and time freely given by all these people and we sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the Committee's learning process. We hope that this Report justifies the efforts they made on our behalf.

The Committee had to cope with an avalanche of material and it has been an immense task to weigh the opinions and to consider the information contained in these documents. Similarly, we found it difficult to present our findings concisely. This Report reviews the present energy system in Canada and, by means of its recommendations, suggests ways that alternative sources of energy and conservation should be promoted. We hope that our conclusions will convince Canadians that, while our country does not yet face a true energy crisis, there is an urgent need to find appropriate substitutes for oil and to move Canada's energy system towards one based upon sustainable energy sources.

Canada has the resources to be a leader in the global energy transition. In this century we have the opportunity not only to secure our own energy future, but also to export new energy technologies we develop along the way. We appreciate that this transformation of our energy system will not be easily achieved, and our recommendations reflect the magnitude of the effort required. We are however optimistic that with a concerted effort, and an enthusiastic and sustained commitment, the task can be accomplished.

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Chairman