

Renewable Resources

not well managed. We have to be sure that the people who give advice to government, this one or any other, are not wedded to the existing reliance on non-renewable resources. They must recognize that wherever it is practicable or wherever it is feasible, we have to insist that the transfer be made. If that is done, the future is very bright for us.

● (1630)

This is an industry, Mr. Speaker, that gives us a tremendous opportunity in the world, if we were to get into it in a reasonably efficient and substantial way. There is no question in my mind that we could provide leadership to many parts of the world. We would have a technology available to us that would be marketable in world terms. We could utilize that to improve Canada's role in world events. There are many parts of the world where they do not have any non-renewable resources of any kind.

We do have the capacity to be self-sufficient in the use of renewable resources. If we were to develop the technology, if we were to show, by example, a willingness to utilize those properly, we could provide a great initiative for many parts of the world and do them a great service.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Bud Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to have the opportunity to speak on this particular bill. The hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) was quite correct in his early statement that his interest in this subject of renewable energy is well known in the House. It is not only through the fact, as he has indicated himself, that he has placed many bills in the private members' area but from the study that he himself has conducted and the speeches that he has made. In the course of the energy programs that have been brought forward, he always seems to find a way to work into the debate something about renewable resources. The fact that his bill, although it is No. 261, has come forward today is a tribute to the hon. member, and an acknowledgement of the fact that he is able to bring a subject that is certainly interesting to the floor of the House for debate.

As someone who has participated in these private members' hours for close to 14 years, I can assure him that many of the ideas that started here as motions or as private members' bills quite often find themselves incorporated in government legislation either of this party or, in a short time possibly, his particular party. It does find its way quite often into legislation. The reason that it may not at first blush be endorsed or incorporated into legislation or accepted in toto is that there may be some technical problem or something of that nature that would give the departmental officials cause to wonder whether, if they incorporated this, it would have a particular impact.

It is important also that people who are pioneers in this particular field recognize that there are members who are prepared to bring bills of this nature to the floor of the House. Quite often, particularly when we have what we thought were

adequate supplies of oil in the world, there were many people working at that time on renewable resources and wondering if anyone was listening, particularly if anyone in Parliament was listening or in the provincial legislatures, for that matter. When we had the jolt that the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) talked about, in the early 1970s, about security of supply and then the second rap in the quadrupling of the oil price by OPEC, suddenly these people who were pioneers were front and centre and had already done a good deal of research in this particular area and at long last felt, I think, that someone was recognizing the fantastic effort that they had made in their pioneer effort in this particular field of renewable energy resources.

It is no accident that I would rise, Mr. Speaker, to speak today on this subject because some years ago it was my privilege to serve as parliamentary secretary to the minister of energy, mines and resources. I know from that experience that the departmental officials, very early in the game, prior to the quadrupling of the oil price—I think it is fair to say more accurately probably through the jolt that we received from the National Energy Board or from the multinational oil companies—found that the prediction that they had made almost a year before was no longer true and that we were in fact facing a shortage of this particular commodity. On that basis the department moved, and I think moved very quickly and very effectively, into a field where they recognized at long last that something would have to be done, or at least something more would have to be done about renewable energy resources.

I compliment the member. I think the bill contains a good idea, the kind of thing he is talking about incorporating into legislation. I do not think, as he says, that it would prove expensive. As a matter of fact, it might prove a good investment if it were incorporated even in its present form. The hon. member was kind enough to comment on the excellent surveys conducted today by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, particularly by the geological surveys branch. They, like anyone else, endeavour through their own initiative, their own talents and skills, to embark upon the kinds of surveys that they think will be beneficial to an industry or a group or to the country as a whole. It is only through the kind of representation that we make, or that the hon. member has already made, that they will know how their surveys, if conducted, could be more productive for Canadians.

In my constituency, in the area of petrochemicals we think of ourselves as the petrochemical centre of Canada. The kind of work, the kind of assistance received and the kinds of surveys done by energy, mines and resources is absolutely crucial if this information is to be made known in a form that will be beneficial to a petrochemical industry.

Second, with the impact of that jolt about the possibility of not having a security of supply, many corporations decided that they had to get together to work out a system whereby the best possible use would be made of this depleting natural resource, namely, oil. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin), who was here today, and was at that time the minister of