

Petroleum and Gas

companies? Frankly, I am convinced that there will be no competition legislation in this Parliament. I am sure this session will end before consumers are given any break or we see any improvement to a national energy policy that has collapsed.

Our Party has called upon the Government and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) to take a number of initiatives in energy. First, the Minister should stop paying so much attention to his own leadership aspirations and spend more time and pay more attention to his Department. We would also like to see the Minister take the initiative of providing a new approach to the national energy policy. Certainly we would like to see a revamped Petroleum Incentives Program. There are many instances in the country where the money that is invested is being pumped into the ocean or used to drill dry holes. Rather, this money could be used to produce immediate benefits for energy security in the country, reduce the costs of energy to Canadians and provide many energy alternatives in this country.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources could authorize a government inquiry into the nuclear fuel cycle immediately. Such an inquiry could look into the problems that have been caused by the dilemma at Key Lake. It could also look into the problem which has been raised repeatedly in the House and the Ontario legislature concerning the apparent failure of the nuclear program in this country and internationally. It seems that Canadians have paid a terrible price for that particular energy initiative.

The Government is proposing to give tax cuts to oil companies when that tax revenue perhaps could be used to fund an inquiry into the nuclear fuel cycle. The other day the Official Opposition complained that the Government was giving our complete nuclear technology to South Korea, which would allow South Korea to function as a competitor on a world-wide basis. It is absolutely insane that Canadian taxpayers would pay to develop a technology, be it positive or negative, and then find that the Government would turn around and sell that technology to a country like South Korea, which will undoubtedly become a competitor for the supply of those products to other nations. It just does not make sense.

The fact of the matter is that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources could authorize the expenditure of that tax revenue, which he proposes to return to the oil companies, on the establishment of an inquiry into the entire nuclear fuel cycle. This can be justified since the whole question of the nuclear industry being of any benefit to Canadians is unsettled, especially with respect to the long-term disposal of wastes. The possibility remains that thousands of years from now those wastes may pose a tremendous problem to future generations. It has been said, perhaps tongue in cheek, that one of the major growth industries in this country could be the closing down and mothballing of nuclear power plants.

I challenge anyone in the Government to tell me what harm there would be in gathering information and public opinion about the nuclear fuel cycle through an inquiry. I give credit to the Official Opposition when it was in government in 1979 for

at least contemplating the creation of an inquiry into the nuclear industry in this country. However, I certainly have not seen any policy commitments from the new Leader of the Conservative Party who is attempting to come to power without any policies. I am sure a statement about this issue would be welcomed by the whole country. It might even give the tired Government across the way, which seems bereft of ideas, some incentive to begin that inquiry now. It could be a constructive effort made by the Official Opposition for a change.

Mr. Shields: Liberal Party West.

Mr. Fisher: Such dulcet tones!

Mr. Regan: Don't say such things.

Mr. Skelly: One cannot even promote that.

In any event, I will continue to discuss alternative energy opportunities and conservation. An amazing thing happened in the House approximately a month ago during a discussion with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about the Petroleum Incentives Program. The Minister was asked why his Department was taking \$50 million out of the Canadian Home Insulation Program so that it could be put into the Petroleum Incentives Program. The Minister stood in the House to say that he would be prepared to inquire into that matter, when in reality that shift of expenditure was already in the Estimates we were to deal with that evening. The Minister was not even sufficiently informed about proposals, which his Department was asking Parliament to authorize, to provide an answer in the House.

That \$50 million in the Canadian Home Insulation Program would provide insulation improvements to thousands of Canadian homes. Furthermore, a proper initiative to get that program under way would represent enormous net savings to Canadians in terms of energy. Yet the Minister's Department—I do not believe the Minister was aware of it—was to take that \$50 million and pour it down one dry hole. In fact, it probably would have cost more than \$50 million. What was the logic behind such a proposal? When there could have been a certain continuing reduction of energy use under the Canadian Home Insulation Program, the Minister was quite prepared to take that \$50 million of taxpayer's money from a sure thing and gamble in the offshore or pour it down one dry hole in the hope of producing something positive for Canadians in terms of energy security. That kind of logic is absolutely wrong because it is shortsighted, short-term and will cause Canadians no end of problems in the future.

The other extreme disappointment is the Government's lack of action on alternative energy uses. There is a great deal of interest in the country in trying to develop the soft paths or alternative approaches to energy use. Several months ago there was a great controversy when the Government was attempting to determine what allocation it would make for the development of alternative energy sources, such as solar energy, and the development of other types of energy alternatives. What the Government said is, "We do not have enough money to do it". Instead of doing that—a paltry sum which really means