

Use of Solar Energy

question of support for this motion. I made it very clear that day that I intended, because of the manner in which these motions have been handled in the past, to talk it out, which I did. In so doing, however, I did not have enough time to put forward my support for the basic principle of the motion moved by the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia).

One of the questions I wanted to ask that day was whether or not either the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Ouellet), who is responsible for Central Mortgage and Housing, or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) would in fact give us some guarantee that the subject of this motion would be acted upon. One of the criticisms I had then, and continue to have, is the lack of support for renewable energy sources within this House. The information that I have is that the budget for the last full fiscal year was something in the order of \$6 million. As the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield) has said on previous occasions, "the government could spill more money than that in any given afternoon."

The need for energy from renewable resources has been well proven. Whether or not this motion in going to committee would give more support to that very necessary subject, is something about which I have a great deal of question. This motion—and I made the point earlier—merely asks that the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation consider changing its lending policy to provide for extra loans. Unlike the United States, it does not provide for relief from the extra costs, or support for those who put in renewable energy sources.

On February 3 I had just arrived at the point of telling the House about a Mr. Ball in the village of Wellington, who has gone to the extent of spending approximately \$20,000 to install wind generators powered by solar energy in his home, and other innovations for using renewable energy to heat and light his home. He has done an exceptionally fine job and, being a machinist, he has done all of the work himself, including the designing. This has brought his regular electric bill down to approximately \$25 a month, but even reducing it by that much will not enable him to regain his \$20,000 investment. There is just no way he could do it taking into account the interest he would have to pay on the money, yet no provision is made by the government to reimburse him for the savings in non-renewable energy resources that he is putting into effect.

● (1712)

It seems to me that we could follow the lead given by the Congress of the United States. There are a number of programs in effect there to reimburse individuals by way of better interest rates, better mortgages, and outright grants, if they are prepared to use renewable energy resources for heating or lighting their homes. I think even a heater for a swimming pool should qualify.

There has also been a great deal of study in the United States into various ways of using renewable energy resources. Several symposiums have been held to study the technology, and the information is readily available. Here in Canada,

[Mr. Ellis.]

where the need for renewable energy resources is far greater, I have not come across any good information which would help people who want to use the resource. We have a problem with high unemployment, yet there is not a single program to encourage industries in this field, particularly small businesses, to become involved in the development and construction of parts and equipment necessary to the use of renewable energy in homes. At a number of home shows I attended recently, all of the technology came from the United States.

I have no quarrel with the motion of the hon. member for Davenport, Mr. Speaker, as I think it is time the government put legislation before the House to support the use of our renewable energy resources.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I shall not detain the House but I should like to take a few minutes to express my personal support and that of my colleagues for this motion. It is not necessary for me to remind hon. members that we are still in the midst of an energy crisis. We have tended to become so used to the energy crisis that we may feel it has passed away. The fact is that in terms of non-renewable energy resources, particularly oil, gas, and coal, in that order, we are rapidly running out of resources. We also have fewer sources of hydroelectric power, and therefore anything which can be done to help this country face the energy shortages which will confront us in a few years ought to be done immediately.

The best estimates show that by the middle of the 1990's Canada will be spending about \$5 billion per year on imported oil. This will create problems with our balance of payments and costs of production, and it could deliver a serious blow to our economic future. I think we have not been tackling this problem as seriously as we should. No one would suggest for a moment that there is any simple solution to the energy shortage or that a good fairy will wave a magic wand and the problem will disappear.

There will have to be a three-pronged attack, Mr. Speaker. First, we must develop other non-renewable resources—oil from shale or tar sands or heavy oil. We have to make better use of coal than we have done in the past.

The second thing we have to do is embark upon a much more ambitious conservation program to reduce consumption of energy. A good deal of the consumption of energy in this country is wasteful. We consume huge quantities of energy simply because it was cheap in the past and we took it for granted that there would be no limit on the amount of energy available in the future.

The third approach is the one which this motion touches upon, that we must begin immediately to develop the renewable resources. That may be energy from wind, from harnessing the tides, from thermal power, from putting shafts down into the earth and capturing steam, or it may be from capturing the greatest source of energy of all: the sun.

Development of solar energy is something like motherhood and patriotism—everybody supports it. But we really have not done very much about it, Mr. Speaker. Some experiments are