

statesmanship by those in high positions. We cannot let this be a divisive force in this great country of ours; rather, we must use it to make us stronger, and proud of the heritage we have been given. In some parts of our country it calls for greater understanding and forbearance, and in all parts for a willingness to try to meet the problem instead of adopting the unbending stance of those whose short-term parochial concerns are intended to insulate themselves from the rest of the country.

To me the most obvious and logical approach to finding a satisfactory solution is to adopt a program which will concentrate our efforts on Canada's youth, beginning at the elementary school level. Most parents that I know have a keen desire for their children to be able to speak more than one language. They want their children to be given the opportunity, denied to themselves at a similar age, to become totally immersed in both languages from Grade 1. I would therefore suggest that the federal government should, by whatever means possible, seek cooperation from every province in concentrating their efforts on our young so that, a few years down the road, this country will be on its way to being truly bilingual. It is a great satisfaction to see the change of course advocated in the Speech from the Throne.

I would now like to comment on three or four major problems confronting the maritime region, and Nova Scotia in particular. These problems, if left unresolved, can only result in a further widening of the economic gap which exists between Atlantic Canada and other parts of the country. For fear of being accused of being unduly apprehensive, I would quickly add that if these problems are solved, and advantage taken of our many opportunities, then tremendous progress will be made in overcoming, if not eliminating, those economic disparities which have plagued us for so many years.

The number one problem facing Nova Scotia today is the extremely high cost of electrical energy. Next to Prince Edward Island, we have at this time the highest power rates in the country, and, in addition, the Nova Scotia Power Corporation has an application before the province's Board of Public Utilities for a further substantial increase in its electric power rates.

The reason why Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island find themselves in such an unenviable position in respect to high power rates is their almost complete dependence on imported oil for the generating of electricity. They just do not have the vast hydro resources of most of their sister provinces, and therefore must rely on fossil fuels to fire their thermal generating plants. Nova Scotia is 65 per cent dependent on oil to generate electricity, with the balance of its power coming from coal and a small amount of hydro.

From an historical point of view, former provincial governments and public utilities faced with the then high cost of coal and the lack of hydro power, opted to use oil as the primary fuel to generate electricity. Consequently, a number of thermal plants were converted from coal to oil burning capability. This was perhaps a wise decision at the time because the oil-produc-

ing nations of the Middle East and Venezuela were, by today's prices, practically giving away their petroleum.

However, as we are all well aware, following the armed conflict in the Middle East in 1973 the OPEC nations entered into a price-fixing arrangement that has resulted in more than a 500 per cent increase in the price of oil. Oil which cost \$1.75 per barrel then costs in excess of \$13 a barrel delivered today. The overall effect of this on Nova Scotia, its people and its economy, is, to say the least, devastating.

The Nova Scotia Power Corporation requires in the order of 10 million barrels of oil a year to generate the electricity needed by our people and industry. In these circumstances the only possible way for the corporation to keep operating is to pass the additional cost of buying that oil to the consumer in the form of higher prices.

In the meantime, the province must embark, and has in fact embarked, on a program of energy conservation and efficiency as well as the development of alternate power sources, so as to enable Nova Scotia substantially to reduce its dependency on expensive foreign oil. But this takes time.

The most immediate alternate source of energy is coal, of which the province has a good supply. The Nova Scotia Power Corporation is building two new coal-fired thermal plants in Cape Breton, the first of which will be in operation late in 1979 and the second in 1981. Two others are possible by mid-1984. A total saving of approximately 8 million barrels of imported foreign oil is possible by the time the last two are in operation.

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Two long-range schemes are potentially exciting and would certainly do much to change the province's dependency on fossil-based fuel. The first is the much talked about Fundy tidal power, and the second is the construction of a power grid in eastern Canada from which could be tapped surplus power from Labrador, Quebec and New Brunswick when it becomes available.

From the foregoing I think it can be seen that Nova Scotia has a unique and terrifying energy problem, and that it is trying, by whatever means at its disposal, to cope with what can only be considered an unforeseen disaster of gigantic proportions. However, at best it will be some years before the province can realistically gain any significant advantage from its medium to long term power options.

I should point out that further heavy increases in power rates will inevitably force some industries out of business, because they will not be able to absorb the costs and remain competitive, let alone survive. The resulting increased unemployment would only compound the socio-economic problems faced by Nova Scotia at the present time. Many Nova Scotian homeowners, particularly those on fixed and low incomes, are already finding it difficult, if not impossible, to cope with the present high rates. Imagine the agonizing effect that further rate increases will have.

In this context, I suggest to my fellow senators that the request of the Government of Nova Scotia for assistance from