

Use of Solar Energy

such as the National Research Council in conjunction with provincial governments, utility commissions, and the private sector are so oriented.

Fortunately, we can draw upon the knowledge presently known and thus the government can respond constructively to the suggestion by the hon. member for Davenport. I am pleased to report that the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) has directed Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to review its lending policy with respect to solar energy and to present its recommendations to him. He is particularly interested in the impact upon the present lending policy which provides for maximums on loans and also the measures necessary to ensure that only those systems providing effective performance are authorized.

With these few comments, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to indicate that the government agrees with this motion. I should like to thank the hon. member for bringing such a worthwhile motion to the House this afternoon.

Mr. W. Kenneth Robinson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I intend to speak only briefly in support of the motion put forward by the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia). My brevity reflects the degree of merit I attach to this motion. I sincerely hope that all members will see fit to refer this motion to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works without further debate.

In 1973, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) raised substantially the international price of oil and some of the oil exporting countries curtailed production and applied an embargo against certain oil importing countries. These actions precipitated what has come to be known as the energy crisis of the winter of 1973-74, and since then prices for crude oil have remained high. As a result of this crisis, it became necessary for Canada, along with other industrialized nations, to re-think and adjust our energy policy.

In 1976, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources outlined a new direction in Canada's energy strategy. The objective of the strategy is the achievement of energy self-reliance. One of the policy areas involved in the attainment of self-reliance is increased research and development which has the potential to provide new energy options. One of these new options is renewable energy resources, which includes tidal, wind, biomass, geothermal and solar power. In February 1977, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, realizing that renewable energy sources would be playing an increasingly dominant role in Canada's future energy supply, allotted renewable energy the largest share of the \$10 million federal research development spending for the fiscal year 1977-78. Also, it was announced that the Department would establish a renewable energy research branch.

Our goal of self-reliance was reaffirmed in the Speech from the Throne. The relevant passage is as follows:

In the field of energy, it will continue to be the determined policy of the government to work with the provinces towards the goal of self-reliance, particularly by encouraging exploration and conservation to reduce our dependence on imported oil. Further encouragement will be given to the development of

[Mr. Harquail.]

energy saving technology of renewable energy resources and of the application of solar energy.

I should like to take a moment to outline some of the federal renewable energy projects now underway. The solar heating research and development program of the National Research Council has undertaken a number of projects. After completing a feasibility study of solar heating in Canada in 1976-77, several new initiatives were started, which included the sponsorship of the construction of fourteen solar-heated demonstration homes, the funding of seven research and development solar heating contracts and the establishment of an independent solar-collector test facility.

Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is working presently on a ten-year program, the mini-utility concept, which would develop parcels of land in the suburbs as sites for solar collectors to service communities using solar heating systems.

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How does Canada's performance compare with the solar energy activities of other countries? The United States has made a clear commitment to the development of solar energy. Its goal is the provision of at least 7 per cent of the total national energy requirements by solar energy by the year 2000. Japan is also very active in solar research, development and application. In Australia, Sydney University was awarded \$5.5 million by Saudi Arabia to continue solar research. Other countries with major solar commitments are France, Israel, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden.

Many people may question, why fund the expansion and development of solar energy? First of all, solar energy, unlike the fossil fuels, is essentially perpetual and inexhaustible. It is the basis of all life on earth and it is free. The notion that Canada is too cold a country to benefit from solar energy has been cast aside. We do have sufficient solar energy to meet present and future energy requirements.

Second is the degree of interest expressed by many Canadians. For example, the concept of a "conservator society" embodies the movement towards a greater reliance on renewable sources of energy, such as solar, rather than drawing on the world's stocks of non-replaceable fossil fuels.

I would like to close, Mr. Speaker, on a prediction made by Dr. Harry Swain, head of the renewable energy resources branch of energy, mines and resources. I quote:

A major crunch is coming in world oil prices around 1982 to 1985. We must get serious about solar power now. It takes time to build up an industry, establish the proper solar equipment and better housing standards, work out suitable lending rates from banks and devise government incentives. If we postpone all this to the next round of the energy crisis, it will be too late.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my support for this motion and urge its acceptance and referral to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works for further consideration.

Mr. Rod Blaker (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I must apologize to you and to hon. members in that I should have paid more attention to the order