

Energy Conservation

buildings, hotels and offices that temperatures be lower in the winter and higher in the summer. Surely it is not too much to reduce speeds on our highways and by commercial aircraft, and to ask that all modes of transport operate with higher load factors. Surely it is not too much to require that pricing practices of utilities be such that consumers are rewarded, rather than being penalized, when they practice conservation.

● (1620)

The government expects within a very few weeks to have programs to do many of these things. However, not all lie within federal jurisdiction and not all can be accomplished quickly. The important thing is to make a start at each jurisdictional level and then to require changes as rapidly as possible as we move toward a new situation in energy.

Let me illustrate the potential savings from only one of the measures that is being considered. It happens to involve transportation, which the IEA report describes as a sector in which "much more needs to be done". If, through minimum efficiency standards, the average efficiency of Canadian automobiles could be raised from the present 17.5 miles per gallon to 28 miles per gallon by 1985—a shift that is both technologically and economically feasible with no change in the structure of the automobile industry and with very little effect on consumers—the consumption of gasoline would drop from the present 600,000 barrels per day to just over 400,000 barrels per day. This potential saving is all the more impressive because it is based on an assumption that the number of automobiles in Canada will expand in the next decade from eight million to eleven million and that each automobile is driven as much as are those in the existing fleet. Despite these strong forces for expansion, a simple increase in automobile efficiency would bring us to less than zero energy growth for motor gasoline over the next decade. Savings are so large, and costs so small, that one wonders how anyone can object to such a conservation measure.

Let me conclude by referring briefly to the fifth and final portion of the government's program which involves the longer term future. Conservation has been variously described as an opportunity, an ethic and a way of life. It is all these things. We no longer have a choice about whether we are going to conserve. In an era in which energy costs are rising dramatically, in which energy supplies are becoming smaller and smaller relative to the demand, and in which great concern is being voiced about worldwide effects of excessive energy demand, a vigorous and profound program of energy conservation is essential. Indeed, it may be the optimum policy for Canada.

It is seldom recognized how powerful are the effects of even small efforts at conservation. For every 0.1 per cent that the rate of growth of energy consumption can be reduced between now and 1990, there will be a reduction in energy use in 1990 by the equivalent of one Syncrude-sized tar sands plant or five Pickering-sized CANDU nuclear stations. That is capital saved and inflation moderated. In any one year, for each 1.0 per cent drop in energy consumption—something that can be achieved easily by thermostat adjustments, or by driving slightly less, or by good furnace maintenance—consumers save about \$200 million at the retail level, which would reduce future capital cost for

energy supply by more than \$0.5 billion. Assuming the 1 per cent annual saving were achieved only for heating oil in the maritimes and Quebec, oil import subsidy payments would drop by \$12 million. When the fight against inflation is so critical to our national well-being, when the need for imported petroleum threatens our balance of payments, and when excessive consumption diminishes our competitive position, such savings cannot be ignored.

Let me finally assure this House of two things. First, the government will be implementing additional energy conservation measures in the near future. These measures will affect many sectors and regions of our economy, but they are the least that we can do to protect our own position, to meet our international responsibilities and to avoid even worse disruption in the future. But, second, this House must be aware that the measures that have already been introduced and those that will be introduced to conserve energy represent only the first, immediate and easiest steps towards conservation.

In the longer term, this government will be coming forward with more important and far-reaching and, I must add, more costly measures. We are at a point where we must give at least as much attention to measures to reduce the demand for energy as we give to ways to increase the supply, and we must give equivalent consideration to investments in energy conservation as we have been giving to investments in energy production.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my heart goes out to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Foster) for having been forced to read a report like that. I used to think of this as just the posturing of the ex-minister of energy, mines and resources, but now it is very clear from the fairy story we have heard this afternoon that it should be called "Alastair in Wonderland" instead of "Donald in Wonderland".

First, we have a representative of the Crown stand up in this House and say that after all that was said in this critical report by the International Energy Agency, we are only tenth on the list instead of seventeenth. That is the government's defence. Then he goes on to put forward the argument that in the national building code, which has been in existence for several years, there is a requirement that the thickness of insulation be doubled. The question we must ask, in plain honesty is, how many builders follow the national building code? Everyone knows builders follow the municipal building codes.

Second, as one of my colleagues to my left pointed out, there is no effort at all to put before the people who are building the homes what this will mean in cost. I think in respect of the government's highfalutin' report, which a year ago I described as a posture, one of the delay factors can be found in an article in one of our leading newspapers, the *Globe and Mail*, which writes:

The office charged with developing the federal government's energy conservation program is finding that, in the words of research officer Brian Kelly, "the wheels of progress grind slowly."

It's also had to forgo a research director for a while in the name of bilingualism.

I shall not say any more. In structuring up these programs, when the whole world is anxious to see all the nations reduce their demands for the limited fossil fuels