

*Private Members' Business*

We also rely on abundant reasonably priced domestic energy sources such as coal, hydro, natural gas, uranium and oil. We sell to other countries mainly forestry products, minerals, agricultural goods and various energy products.

When the time comes for drawing up international accounts the emissions associated with the activities producing these exports are attributed to Canada, not to the countries that consume the exports. In contrast, Canadian imports are generally less energy intensive but we receive no credit for that.

However, the last factor affecting greenhouse gas emissions cannot be blamed on anyone else and that is the relatively affluent lifestyle of Canadians. We regard as necessities what would be unimaginable luxuries to most inhabitants of third world countries, but those necessities come at a price, our disproportionately high release of greenhouse gases. With many factors conspiring to drive up our use of energy and our greenhouse gas releases it might seem a daunting task to try to hold them to acceptable levels.

Though the picture I have painted may be grim, there are grounds for optimism and the source is the concept that has become a rallying cry for our times, sustainable development. The idea of sustainability entered the public awareness about the same time as the threat of climate change in the mid-1980s. For radical problems it proposes a radical dynamic solution; re-establishing a balance between human activities and natural systems, integrating economic and environmental goals, working not for short term profits but for long term benefits and enhancing the quality of life.

Earlier it had seemed that advocates of the environment had to be adversaries of human progress and vice versa. Sustainable development taught us that this is not the way things have to be. Countless times in the past humanity has turned seeming obstacles into challenges and barriers into opportunities for advancement. That is what the environmental challenge of our time is.

That is what the threat of planet change is, a looming danger certainly but at the same time a spur to find new and better ways of doing business and living our lives. It is an opportunity to do things more efficiently, more effectively, more competitively and, above all, more sustainably. The problem has been clearly identified: rapidly increasing emissions of greenhouse gases accumulating in the atmosphere at record levels, altering climate in ways that may not be completely predictable but are quite possibly very severe. The solution surely is obvious, bringing the emissions under control to keep the changes of climate within acceptable parameters.

The question then becomes how can we control or reduce emissions. We need to reduce the energy needed to power our economy. We need to continue building a less energy intensive

economy and choosing a less energy intensive lifestyle. That is by no means a fantasy. After all, over the last two decades we have seen the automobile industry wrestle successfully with this problem. Today it manufactures cars that go much farther on a litre of gasoline and that burn their fuel much cleaner than in the 1960s. That is only an indication of what is possible but it shows us the direction we should take.

We need to work toward energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of non-polluting renewable energy sources. As representatives of the Canadian public there are many ways in which we can further this effort. One of the most important is by fostering science and appropriate technology development in pursuit of our climate change goals. We must support the people who are looking for new knowledge and new solutions. We must encourage research and development and we must smooth the path from thinking up bright ideas to successfully marketing them on a large scale. New ideas are central to Canada's environmental industries which make up one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy today.

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A few weeks ago the government announced a Canadian environmental industry strategy, a co-ordinated approach to promoting this sunrise sector. The potential is for this to become one of Canada's export leaders, developing new energy saving techniques and marketing them domestically and abroad.

Infrastructure renewal is still another opportunity for promoting resource conservation. The old deteriorating installations squander energy and release pollutants. The government's municipal infrastructure program is helping replace these relics of the past with clean and efficient facilities.

I mention as well the high cost of transportation in Canada. Now a new expressway beckons us, one that will not become snowbound in winter or develop potholes in the first spring thaw.

I am referring of course to the information superhighway, the electronic network with possibilities that organizations and individuals are only starting to explore. It is the kind of business that Canada should be involved in where distances and weather are immaterial and energy expenditures are minimal.

These are all measures that promote energy conservation and efficiency and do the right thing for climate change. At the same time, however, they and other initiatives are creating business opportunities and jobs. Another example is the growing technology not only of government installations but also of private homes, offices and industrial plants.

The measures are transforming our country's economy, making our companies more efficient, more productive and more competitive. After all, the firm that can get more for its energy dollar is the firm that can sell at a lower price. In today's cost