

Marine Resources Development Study

Deep water access will be essential to the future competitiveness of many of our Canadian industries.

Electrical power production has constantly increased over the past, roughly doubling each decade. This means that by the year 2000 we will require approximately eight times more hydroelectric energy power than we have at the present time. Fossil and nuclear-fueled generating facilities require vast amounts of cooling water, and the location of these plants must take into account the problems and potential benefits of warming the local waters in relation to ecological balances, recreation, and so on.

We know there is serious pollution in estuaries and that coastal fisheries and shellfish beds are contaminated. We do not have the evidence at hand to state categorically that pollution in causing damage to the ocean itself. We do know it poses serious threats to marine nursing areas and, potentially, to ocean fisheries. International attention has been attracted to this problem. Scientists are involved in and working with various committees and international organizations such as the Food and Agricultural Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization and the World Meteorological Organization.

This week, Mr. Maurice Strong, a prominent Canadian who is Secretary General to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, was in Ottawa. Hon. members will have read in the newspapers that Mr. Strong is pursuing very energetically his goal to achieve a greater degree of international co-operation in this field. However, the newspapers did not highlight the fact that Mr. Strong voiced satisfaction with Canada's role preparatory to the conference. Mr. Strong said, in effect, that to date Canada has been one of the major contributors. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Corbin), who could not be here today, in his capacity as chairman of the preparatory committee recently toured the country to receive briefs from interested groups and individuals. Their opinions will help form a strong Canadian position at the conference.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, may I say that while I agree on the importance of effectively utilizing the scientific and engineering knowledge and skills of the public service and government agencies in order to maximize the use and protection of the resources of the marine environment of Canada, I consider that the degree of co-operation already achieved is impressive. This country is not only a leader in this field but it has accepted and has played a major role internationally.

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that this motion would be debated this afternoon. If I had kept in touch I might have done the same sort of work that obviously the previous two speakers have done. I should like to compliment the mover of the motion, and the hon. member who just completed his remarks, on the work they did in preparing their speeches.

I questioned the Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Gillespie) about what Canada should be looking at in a specialized sense. The minister listed this field as being one with great potential. He stated that we had

[Mr. Foster.]

sufficient expertise and a great deal of fresh water and sea coast, as well as areas where the water is not very deep, to enable Canada to specialize in developing new industries. I am thinking of the specialized area of oil drilling; this might be one area in which Canada could contribute significantly. We might even make economic use of this expertise in order to obtain benefits beyond those which other nations have achieved.

We have a submarine which might be used in drilling offshore. I am also thinking of the problems in this area. We can see the need for a program such as is suggested. I talked to an oil man just a few days ago. He told me about some of the problems of his company with regard to drilling for oil. He spoke about the problems they may have drilling in the middle of Hudson Bay, where the water is very cold. An oil spill there would obviously create a great problem. These people are learning much as they go along.

I think there is merit in the motion before us, in the sense that the knowledge gained by one company might be used by another, particularly when we consider the amount of oil and natural gas in Canada, the Arctic Islands, Hudson Bay and off the east and west coasts. A co-ordinated study such as the hon. member suggests would be very valuable to all concerned. I am dealing with only one area, oil. An over-all study of the problems associated with drilling for oil would be worth while, especially when we consider the Arctic Islands and the great stretches of water between them. When you have a natural resource, you take advantage of it. This is one of the reasons we should support the hon. member's motion.

I am a Saskatchewan farmer and am therefore not very familiar with fish farming. However, we do have fish in our Prairie slews. To date fish farming has been only an experimental program, a conversation piece and a bit of fun for the people involved. The results have been good, and I believe that if we adopted this approach on a larger scale to the waters of our coasts it could bring huge returns in an economic sense. But we must apply ourselves to a consistent program of fish farming.

• (1630)

[Translation]

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I read carefully the motion of the hon. member which, incidentally, deals with a topic of the highest importance for the Canadian economy, namely the better use of our marine resources and others which will inevitably contribute much to our economy.

I have no intention of treating lightly the motion before the House this afternoon, but may I be allowed to ask where the mover of this motion has been these past few years. I understand he has dealt with mines, especially offshore deposits, but where was he when the government made giant strides in the control of Canadian fisheries? Either, he does not wish to recognize what Canada has done, or else he was not interested in that field of almost daily concern to the Canadians and especially the government.

Dealing only with these resources which, in my view, are the real wealth of the sea, that is the living resources, I shall make a quick review of the initiatives taken by