

Energy Conservation

I am encouraged by the example of the federal government in some government buildings. This is no more than giving leadership in the operation of mechanical systems in terms of the ventilation, lighting schedules, and hot water heating. It has taken 12 to 15 per cent of the energy requirements per square foot per year out of those buildings. I am not at all convinced that those operational programs have gone nearly as far as they could or should. However, it does demonstrate what can be done.

I am greatly encouraged to see in the over all conservation program of the government that it intends to work closely with both the industrial and commercial sector in giving leadership in the engineering and design aspect of it, setting out good computer programs to be used by the consulting engineers and architects. It would thus be possible to devise for each and every building the best type of system in terms of first cost, owning cost, and the amount of energy it would use. Some of the newer office buildings use not much more than half the number of lights which were installed in similar buildings only five years ago, yet the lighting level may be 20 per cent higher. This illustrates what could be done.

● (2040)

Greater consideration might be given through our tax system to those installing energy conservation systems. Over the years a number of concessions have been made to environmental cost and it seems we should be equally concerned about the promotion of energy-saving measures. I would like to see a fast write-off for people who install equipment specifically designed to conserve energy. This would apply mainly to the commercial sector and to current activity, though in time the concession could be extended to cover the refurbishing of older buildings constructed at a time when we were not greatly concerned about saving energy. These are the buildings we ought to be doing something about now.

I also feel the government should play an important role in setting out design levels which manufacturers of domestic appliances such as air conditioners and similar appliances would have to meet. If one looks through the results of U.S. research in this field one finds that there is maybe as much as 100 per cent variation in the amount of energy used in the course of the performance of two outwardly similar machines. At present we require in Canada that all electrical products be approved by the Canadian Standards Association. Most Canadian manufacturers submit their designs to the association at this point of time, and though there might be some objection—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Carry on.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Milne: I appreciate the opportunity to continue, Madam Speaker. I shall take only another minute or two. I think there is a good case to be made for setting out

specific design levels in connection with many of the appliances we use, and for requiring manufacturers to meet those standards covering the amount of energy their products use to perform any given task.

A lot has been said about mass transit, speed limits, and smaller, more efficient cars. I think we are very fortunate in Canada to have kept our railroads up over the years. I say this having regard to some of the problems faced by our neighbours to the south in terms of moving large quantities of materials. I believe it requires something like 670 btu's to move a ton on the railroad, about 2,800 on a truck, and about 42,000 on an airplane. So it seems to me a basic strategy would be to divert as much freight as possible from trucks to the railways.

It amazes me why more of the trucks I see on highway 401 do not move by piggy back on the railway. At times it is almost like watching a train of big tractor trailers moving along that highway. Then again, in the riding from which I come one sees perhaps 500 to 600 gravel trucks a day moving from the escarpment to the city. Since we are interested in preserving energy it would seem to me there is a good case for diverting some of this traffic to the railroads. I am encouraged to think that the electrification of the railroads is being seriously considered, a move which promises certain rewards from the angle of efficiency.

Another thing we should be working toward is better co-ordination between the energy conservation program of the federal government, the various provincial governments, some of the public utilities, and the engineers of the bigger companies. I believe we all share the same concern. We might be better off if there were a highly co-ordinated program; divide the responsibility and let each sector take a serious approach to it.

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I should like the hon. member for Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Milne) to realize that there are not many members to whom we would agree to an extension of time. But he was being so constructive in his approach that, following the suggestions made from this side of the House and urged for so long, we felt it was time a speaker on the other side had a chance to put something constructive on the record.

The policies he was suggesting are in the main exhortative. I think something more persuasive is required, something in the nature of a fiscal inducement.

I rise in shame and extreme concern to enter the debate this evening because of the knowledge that Canada has been castigated by the international community in an international report for failing—and here I quote from our motion, which in turn quotes from the report—to give practical form to its pretensions in the field of energy conservation. Or, in the words of the report as appearing, “to have accepted the goal of conservation without recognizing the need to implement the goal with specific actions”.

I am distressed to feel we need this evening to underline this shortcoming, yet it must be drawn to the attention of the Canadian people that this shortcoming does exist. I draw some comfort from the fact that it is the Canadian cabinet which is criticized in this fashion as appearing to