

Fuel Consumption Standards

up to 1,000 automobiles a year. They would be exempt from some of the provisions in this legislation. That seems to make sense, and I suppose it is a recognition that Canada does have some footholds in the automobile industry. There are Canadian-owned operations in which specialty equipment, trucks and other vehicles are developed. As well as protecting Canadian industry and encouraging it, the fuel efficiency requirements might also even encourage employment and development. Contrary to what the previous speaker said, they might provide some opportunity or an expanded opportunity for Canadians to develop a presence in the automobile industry and especially in this specialized area.

I would like to take a few moments to develop the idea that the bill is probably another example of a token approach to what is really needed. Instead of considering this piece of legislation before us tonight and the design of this legislation, I would like to point out some of the shortcomings in the philosophy which underpins our whole system. We in our party have argued that strong legislation and programs should be brought forward, but legislation such as this and other programs the government has brought forward are tokens. Energy demonstration projects are certainly a good idea to move communities off oil and on to other more acceptable forms of energy. Conversion to propane and natural gas is certainly an excellent proposal. Insulation programs aimed at conservation are good, with the exception of the colossal failure of the urea formaldehyde mess. With that exception, these are solid programs which take us in the direction we should be going. They are the ones which ultimately will create most of the employment in this country and the development of long-term renewable alternate energy sources which would have fewer detrimental effects on the environment in the long run. I do not think anyone in this House disagrees with that. Such energy sources will be our ultimate security.

Everyone agrees that there must be a dislocation period during which the need for alternate energy and stringent conservation measures must be recognized. Those measures must be developed and implemented, and it will take time before we actually begin to realize the benefits.

Unfortunately, time and time again over the years we have seen examples of the very shortsighted policy of the government, and there has been a message in that. We have always opted for the most expensive and dangerous projects. Down the road when our children are cleaning up the mess we will have left behind those projects will be viewed as some of the most stupid ever developed.

I will touch just lightly on some hard commitments the government has made while it relies on bills like this and other programs which are token commitments. I listened with interest to the minister today as he spoke about the need for alternate energy and conservation methods. We also listened to him the other day when he spoke about his atomic energy program. The government should be prepared to spend some of the money spent on the atomic energy program on research and development into more efficient fuels for transportation or to assist in research and development into more effective

engines for automobiles and aircraft. I have heard my colleagues from Saskatchewan talk about the electrification of railroads. Imagine where we would be if we were serious about alternate fuels for transportation and used some of the money we have dumped into the Candu program over the years for research and development into that. For decades Canadian taxpayers have dumped tremendous amounts of money into the Candu program.

I want to elaborate for a moment on the question of our approach to atomic energy to demonstrate where we will wind up with that approach compared with where we would wind up if we put more emphasis on conservation and alternate energy. We are aware that the Canadian government has made a tremendous investment in the development of nuclear power and the development of nuclear fuels. That investment culminated in 1974, in the fact that India used our technology to explode a nuclear weapon. India became a nuclear power and exacerbated the problem of nuclear proliferation, which is probably the most serious problem human beings have.

Alastair Gillespie was mentioned in the House just a few moments ago. He is a former minister of energy, mines and resources. The previous speaker said much about Mr. Gillespie's contribution to the energy policy of Canada. I have always remembered a statement made by Mr. Gillespie after the Indian government exploded a nuclear weapon. He said he regretted it very much but that Canadians had made a massive investment. He was asked if the Canadian government would stop the production and sale of the Candu reactor, and his answer was no. He said that Canada had made a massive investment in nuclear technology and had a right to expect a return on the investment. That statement stands out starkly in the minds of many Canadians. That is the most blatant gun-seller mentality imaginable. Considering the ultimate price of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the proliferation of nuclear wastes in the environment for who knows how long, there are not many Canadians who want that return on their investment. However, the government does not learn. Instead of opting for tremendous investments in a secure energy future and in technology for energy conservation and developing alternate sources, we continue to plow money into this very dangerous and expensive lemon.

There is now a problem in Argentina. With respect to weapons, wastes and technology failures, Mr. Gillespie's bottom line was that Canadians have a right to expect a return on their investment. That stands as the guiding policy of the government. Perhaps some hon. members opposite will stand and refute that, but the Canadian government sold a nuclear reactor to Argentina for \$500 million. It was a great deal, but the unfortunate thing was that it represented a loss of \$130 million to Canadian taxpayers. We paid Argentina a large chunk of money to buy a reactor. Canadian taxpayers are paying for that. Instead of investing \$130 million in alternate energy to provide Canadians with a secure and safe energy future, we gave that \$130 million to the Argentinians, who would not sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. As a matter of fact, their statement on the issue was that Argentina