

Private Members' Business

through the turbines. In Canada hydro electric power produces nearly two-thirds of all of our energy consumed.

Though hydro power is the main form of renewable energy, there are many problems or potential problems connected with it. For example, most of us are aware of the Kemano project in British Columbia. Because this project was exempted from a full environmental assessment by the previous government, resource and community concerns remain in debate with hostile stakeholders in many areas.

The Great Whale project near James Bay also illustrates the continuing environmental concerns of many of these energy megaprojects. As such, British Columbia has gone away from many of the larger projects into much smaller even to the point of small streams and rivers generating small areas that are more environmentally friendly than a huge megaproject.

The seas can also be utilized to create wave and tidal power. Temperature differences between deep cold water and warm surface waters are utilized as a power source called ocean thermal energy conversion.

By and large it is going to be in the end market forces and public demand that will direct the energy market whether it be in favour of renewable or non-renewable sources of energy.

To conclude, these are just some of the issues surrounding the use of renewable sources of energy which need to be considered when we consider whether we should be promoting this form of energy. I am mentioning these because it is easy to look at only one side of the issue without considering some of the associated concerns.

When we talk about shifting from one form of energy to another it is important that the contribution of energy development to the material welfare of Canadians be balanced against environmental sustainability.

In 1992 the production of energy supplies was valued at over \$35 billion or 7 per cent of our gross domestic product. It employed over 300,000 people. Energy accounts for 11 per cent of total exports, 17 per cent of all investments and is responsible for an annual trade surplus of over \$10 billion. It is a big player.

In summary, I am not suggesting that we promote one form of energy over another or that we should not consider using more renewable sources of energy. However, I do suggest that the energy consumption habits of all Canadians are an area for scrutiny. Rather than generate more energy we need to learn to use less. Therein lies the solution.

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank you and the hon. members of this House for permission to sit due to a cast on my leg.

I heartily endorse the motion introduced by the hon. member for Davenport this evening. The House has heard something of the history of climate change and what the world and Canada are doing about it.

I should like to present some thoughts on the economic aspects of this issue. Ultimately climate change could have a major impact on jobs, business and farms throughout our country. That makes it a matter of vital importance to every Canadian. We all need to understand and better know what its effects will be.

The impact could potentially be crippling. A melting polar ice cap could disrupt east coast fisheries. Rising sea levels could inundate low lying areas of the Atlantic provinces. On the Great Lakes water levels could fall sharply, stranding industries. We could see more frequent and more violent storms. Draughts could worsen on the prairies. New diseases and insect pests could infest our crops and threaten human health. Flooding could occur in the Fraser River basin. In the north the permafrost would no longer provide a solid foundation for buildings and pipelines, putting existing installations at risk.

These developments would translate into economic loss and it could be more severe because of the particular nature of Canada's economy. This is highly dependent on resource based industries such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry, all of which are very sensitive to climate change.

In view of that sensitivity, Canada must act vigorously to try to mitigate possible climate change. The most direct way that we can do so is by reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide.

While Canadians make up only half of 1 per cent of the global population, we do account for 2 per cent of the worldwide emissions of greenhouse gases.

• (1850)

On a planetary scale we generate far more than our fair share of greenhouse gases. Unless Canada and other developed countries take the lead and demonstrate that we are serious about cutting our emissions the developing world will not begin to do its part to bring the problem under control.

To remedy the situation we first need to understand why it has occurred, where do Canada's greenhouse gases come from and why are they so high in proportion to our population. The answers to these questions have to do with Canada's geography, demography and economic infrastructure.

We live in a huge thinly settled country of cold climate and long winters. We must make heavy use of transportation, heating and artificial lighting. Our population is growing faster than that of most developed nations. Our economy relies to a disproportionate degree on resource extraction and agriculture. These activities are generally more energy intensive than manufacturing.