

Renewable Resources

against the same problems which we are facing now, that is how to convey the information to citizens, towns and municipalities so it can be used. In order to solve that problem they decided to gather all the available information and then provide knowledgeable people in the industry at various centres in the United States which could be reached by dialing a zenith phone number. Therefore, if someone wanted to phone to inquire about installing a solar unit in their house they could obtain the necessary information. A town or municipality could use this service to find out if it is possible to use ground heat to heat its buildings. Some units of the Armed Forces are presently using that technology. This information is made available to citizens of the United States through the use of the zenith phone number. It is one possible example which we could follow. It would be easy to implement because there are subdepartments of Energy, Mines and Resources across Canada which could make that information available by providing a telephone number.

• (1610)

As an example of consolidation of information, the present federal government has in place what is called the Canada lands inventory. It takes inventory of the potential wealth of minerals in our nation now, consolidates it and makes it available to the private sector if it wishes to use that information. That is the kind of example we should follow to consolidate all the potential renewable energy sources in this country and make them available to our citizens.

We must work closely with the provinces when doing this because, of course, many of these surveys are done by the provincial governments. The natural resources, of course, are under provincial jurisdiction. However, it will be useful for the federal government to have some of that information in its data bank as well. I would think that it would be important for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of the Environment and others to work very closely with the provinces to put this type of system in place.

As we know, the original power and authority of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources was in fact to collect information. Things have changed a lot since that time. Like other departments, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is no longer simply a data collecting agency but is also involved in the whole gamut of energy projects, dealing with the daily production and importing of energy, and in assisting Canadians to give up their dependency on oil and look to other energy sources. So we found that until the advent of renewable resources, any section of the act dealing with minerals, such as Section 3 of the Resources and Technical Surveys Act, automatically covered most energy sources. For instance, oil and gas are considered as minerals for the purposes of the Mineral Year Book of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. However, some sections of the act, such as Sections 6 and 7, can be construed to include renewable energy sources in their bounds, while others do not include that possibility. Again, I say that the purpose of this bill is to remove this anomaly by making specific reference to renewable energy in those sections where reference to energy is only implicit in the word "mineral".

We know that many of our officials in departments go by the letter of the law, and as a result they do not collect the data because "mineral" does not refer to a renewable energy source. These amendments would allow the department to collect and publish that data which is either not available now or is being collected by other departments. As an example, a person who wanted data on passive solar installations, would perhaps first have to contact the National Research Council and then Environment Canada. Someone who would like information on biomass would have to contact Agriculture Canada and someone who wanted to know the velocity of wind would have to contact the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts) because, as I said before, that information is only collected at airports. That is how the bill would work.

We have found there are many readjustments which are necessary in order to get to the viable sources of energy. Once this information is found, it must be made available to the public. More and more people are asking questions with regard to the potentials. Right across the country, many groups have been formed which are interested in forms of solar energy, biomass energy, and so forth, and these people should have that data. Therefore, I commend the bill to the House. I have a number of other bills which I hope I can debate in the forthcoming weeks if the session continues. I know that the work in this field is work that must go on. Hopefully, this bill will ensure that that type of work will continue.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief in my remarks on this bill. One cannot help but wonder why we are going through the exercise today, not because it is unimportant but, rather, because it is always very difficult to speak to oneself. However, I want to congratulate the hon. member for bringing the bill forward. I want to offer our support in trying to promote both the concepts as contained in the bill, limited though they are, and, of course, the over-all concept of dependence on renewable resources as opposed to our existing dependence on non-renewable resources. We expended about two months this year dealing with energy legislation. In all fairness, it was really a debate about the past. It was a debate about an energy resource which, important though it is right at this precise moment, has a limited future. It has a limited future because it will inevitably become depleted, or else the cost of getting it from the source will be so high that it will be virtually impossible for us to take advantage of it. Therefore it depressed me, I must say to Your Honour, that we were devoting so much of our time and that we continue to devote so much of our capital to looking for and getting the elusive last drop of oil. As I look ahead, I just cannot imagine how much that last drop of oil will be worth when we finally get it out of the ground. How many billions of dollars will it cost us to get it, and what use will it be to us in any event?

I am heartened by the fact that there are more people today who are concerned about renewable resources, and renewable energy resources in particular. I become a bit disappointed,