

*The Budget—Mr. Howie*

party. Now there are rumours of more delays. I hope the minister will take the first opportunity to put these rumours to rest and to announce on a specific date that the best tender, based on merit, will be accepted and awarded so that we may have confidence that this program will go forward and that these shipbuilding contracts will provide work for Canada shipyards.

The Department of National Defence has seen the armed forces understaffed, under-equipped and, as far as the lower ranks are concerned, underpaid. Their slender pay packages have been eroded by ever-increasing charges imposed by the Department of National Defence for shelter and utilities.

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) has indicated in this House, in response to questions, that he is not able to take a decision. He does not know whether the government will close the Arctic to all but Canadian-built vessels by 1985—which was the policy of my party—or at all. I suggest that the valuable wealth of the Arctic should be mined by Canadians, transported in Canadian ships and processed in Canada by Canadians. The wealth should be used for the benefit of this nation, not carted offshore to be processed where the good jobs will be performed by people in distant lands.

Also, I would like to see a decision taken soon on moving forward dramatically and constantly with the development of a Canadian merchant marine. I believe this would provide badly-needed jobs for Canadians with a seafaring inclination. It would create a real, dynamic growth in the Canadian economy. Neither of these subjects were mentioned in the budget but I would like to see the government give them the best consideration it possibly can.

● (2120)

The conversion program from heating oil to electric heat has been denied the province of New Brunswick despite the fact that that province now has electric energy generated by hydro dams and by coal-fired thermal plants to the extent of 70 per cent of its capacity. Within one year it will bring on live Atlantic Canada's first nuclear reactor to produce 640 megawatts of electric power. This omission is based on misconception, poor homework and poor judgment exercised by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. I hope the minister will at the earliest possible moment institute the remedial steps which are desirable if this oversight is to be corrected.

At the same time, I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I am not, of my own knowledge, familiar with the economies involved in conversion from oil to electric heat—whether it is desirable now, next year, or when, or even if. But I would like Canadians who live in New Brunswick to have the same right to make that judgment as Canadians who live elsewhere in this country. I also believe, and I am sorry that the budget did not touch on this matter, that alternate energy research should be focused to the extent possible in areas of Canada which suffer from regional disparity. Research, too, should be given a development dimension.

New Brunswick has, on its own, experimented with a solar-heated building presently in operation in Shediac. Prince Edward Island has made rapid advancements in harnessing the wind to produce electric energy. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have all that is necessary in terms of coal supply to carry out experimentation in the gasification and liquefaction of coal. All the Atlantic provinces have made progress in the use of biomass and wood waste. New Brunswick leads the country in research in the use of thermal peat moss, and has also done some work in the field of geothermal research.

Albert county in New Brunswick has an abundance of oil shale which has not been tapped. The Bay of Fundy has the highest tides in the world. We in the maritime provinces have the technology and the ability to harness them and produce over 4,000 megawatts of power if we operate the Fundy tidal power plants in conjunction or in tandem with the development of Gull Island which has the most spectacular hydro electric potential available to man. And below Gull Island is Muskrat Falls on the Churchill River which also has tremendous potential. If these two giant sources of energy are operated in tandem, Atlantic Canada can become the power house of the nation and displace millions of barrels of imported oil. But we do not have the dollars to do it.

The budget mentioned \$25 million, which is a lot of money, but a drop in the bucket when one looks at what is needed for funding. There is an equity of \$200 million in Gull Island, and that is a much better step forward but it still leaves a long way to go. I would like to see the government consider developing this tremendous potential.

In my own riding in terms of energy conservation the small town of Oromocto has announced its intention to heat its public buildings with wood and is moving in that direction without any subsidy. Mr. Lester Hull at Millville in my riding has developed a technique of blowing sawdust into a furnace so as to obtain almost 100 per cent combustion, and he uses this method to heat his home. Mr. Bernard Hargrove of Bath in Carleton County, which is represented in this House by one of our most able parliamentarians, the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain), has built a hydro dam to harness a stream which flows across his property. From this dam he generates electric energy for about 35 families and sells the surplus to the New Brunswick Electric Power Corporation. In Nackawic in my riding the Ste. Anne Nackawic Pulp and Paper Mill burns waste wood to displace the use of expensive oil for the purposes of generating steam for the pulp and paper mill and providing electric energy for its use. Mr. Peter Chalmers, one of my constituents, has built a solar heating unit which supplies part of his domestic needs. All these people have demonstrated ingenuity in the field and advanced the knowledge of this technology. I would like to see them and other Canadians have the opportunity to share their knowledge in this important field.

If I might make a few general comments, the budget itself appears to continue the centralizing process. In many cases it is a sleight-of-hand budget where what you see is not what you get. It projects spending \$66 billion. The interest on our