

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Alternative sources?

Mr. Gillespie: Yes, there are new sources as separate from the question of energy conservation. Energy conservation stands on its own, and in terms of new programs it stands at the top of the list.

Let me conclude by saying that energy conservation is everybody's program. It is not the government's program, it is not industry's program—it is everybody's program. Every member of this House has a responsibility to promote energy conservation. Energy conservation perhaps more than any other single approach at the present time will help solve some of our long term problems on energy, and at the same time assist us in our anti-inflation fight.

Some hon. Members: Page 10. We want page 10.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, in the early part of the day, just prior to this very important debate when the minister was in the riding of Algoma worrying his parliamentary secretary to death, a motion under Standing Order 43 was put by the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) which I think was a fair beginning for the day we have had in this House. This has been a very good debate and I want to congratulate the hon. member for Don Valley as I think he has done a great service to this House and Canada—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): —in bringing to their attention the neglect of the government and the shameful situation that has arisen from that neglect. That motion in effect called for an investigation as a result of the new evidence of the unpleasant and even frightening fact that government officials in the National Energy Board and elsewhere had consistently and dramatically over estimated the depth of the country's energy reserves.

The motion refers to the criticism not by any party in opposition but by the International Energy Agency, an organization which could only be construed as non-partisan. It said that "there appears to be a substantial gap between principle and practice;" that the Canadian cabinet "appears to have accepted the goal of conservation without recognizing the need to implement the goal with specific actions".

A reference was made earlier to page 10, but the minister refused to put on the record the conclusion of this non-partisan report. I think it is important that this be on the record in this debate and I shall now quote from page 10. I think even the most biased supporter of the government, the most blind of the trained seals, would have to agree that this is a condemnation of the government. Here is what it says:

In short, and without under estimating the complexity of the problems, there appears to be a substantial gap between principle and practice. It would appear that the central policy adopted by the cabinet has not yet proved strong enough to get rapid decisions. That is, the cabinet appears to have accepted the goal of conservation without recognizing the need to implement the goal with specific actions. For example, there is an impressive list of short term measures—

I want to digress for a moment. We just heard a view of that from the minister a few moments ago. To continue:

—which do not involve large unit investment, only a few of which have been approved. There is a more impressive list of impending short term measures. There is, furthermore, little evidence as yet of any major impact of energy conservation in terms of long term measures.

Energy Conservation

That is the end of page 10 which the minister chose to ignore when he addressed the House a few moments ago.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I know he has been affected by the rarified and delightful air of northern Ontario but I am sure that omission could not be excused even on those grounds. The fact is that the best the minister could do was to say that the leadership with respect to conservation in Canada had to be provided by the Canadian Automobile Association and not by the government. That was the essence of what he said.

Mr. Gillespie: Oh, come on!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): He made a fine speech. He trotted out all the statistics. He trotted out the great problem we have ahead of us. We all know we have a problem, Mr. Speaker. What we are asking is for that group that has the mandate to lead—a mandate that is perhaps regretted now by some of the Canadian people—should give more than lip service to the programs that are necessary, given the truth of the minister's statistics with respect to the problem.

That is what we wanted from the minister—why we waited with bated breath for his return from northern Ontario in the Minister of Agriculture's (Mr. Whelan) jet.

What did we get? We got more of the same kind of lip service that we got from his predecessor when he brought forward that magnificent advertising program a short while ago. That advertising program of the government, the conservation effect of which is recognized around the world as perhaps the most ineffective of all of the institutions in that department—those two things are not even an excuse—an excuse for a conservation policy.

The minister said we had to look at increasing the supply as part of the policy, and we had to demand the enthusiasm of Canadians. He is quite right, but the question that comes to mind is, what effective action is the minister going to take? Has there been any announcement of new initiatives with respect to transportation—to move people to the use of public transportation? Not one. Has there been any announcement with respect to diverting traffic from the highways to the railroads? Not one. Has there been any announcement with respect to tax incentives to have a smaller automobile produced in this country as part of the North American scene? No. Smaller automobiles have been produced but not in sufficient numbers to have any effect. The minister had better recognize that. This has been happening in spite of the minister's program and not because of it.

The best he could come up with was the bandages and band-aids that have characterized the government's policy with respect to conservation and a host of other things. He mentioned the crowning glory of the government's conservation program, the ten cents a gallon excise tax on gasoline. What will that tax do? I will tell you—absolutely nothing. It will not stop the use of cars, as many must use them because our present public transport systems are inadequate to meet the need. Therefore the tax will merely make motoring more expensive for motorists who must use their cars. If I am wrong I am sure the minister will stand up and trot out statistics to prove me wrong; but he is not doing that.

What are the government's long term views? I suggest that the government's record in the field of research and