La France prépare aussi un réacteur de chauffage (le projet Thermos) mais ce dernier serait 50 fois plus puissant que celui de l'EACL. Il est prévu pour le chauffage de quartiers urbains complets. Au fur et à mesure que ces projets progressent il sera nécessaire de se pencher sur les questions de sécurité nucléaire et de confiance du public. C'est une question qui pourrait éventuellement être abordée dans le cadre de la coopération industrielle entre le Canada et la Communauté européenne.

COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMME

The Canadian National Energy Programme has set a goal of oil self-sufficiency for Canada by 1990. One of the first steps has been the Propane Vehicle Grant Programme with its target of 100,000 propane-powered vehicles by 1985. Another gaseous fuel, natural gas, is also the subject of much interest, and the Government of Canada has recently embarked on a major demonstration programme to assess the commercial, technical and regulatory feasibility of vehicles operating on compressed natural gas (CNG). The programme will comprise two elements:

- a general CNG vehicle demonstration designed for small fleets or individual vehicles, including those privately owned. Each participant will receive a taxable contribution of $600 per vehicle in exchange for the provision of data accumulated on costs and operating experience.
- a CNG fleet demonstration, aimed at large captive fleet operations. This will involve the management of a demonstration programme encompassing such vehicles as taxis, school buses and light commercial vehicles operating as fleets.

The objectives of the demonstration programme are to provide economic information on compressed natural gas as a motor fuel, leading to a better assessment of its best markets and uses; to provide operating experience for assessing known and potential technical problems that need to be resolved to permit a wider commercialization of the fuel; to improve the opportunity for Canadian industry to develop expertise in CNG conversion technology and equipment design, ultimately leading to the establishment of manufacturing facilities for a range of CNG carburation equipment; and to make this new fuel better known to Canadians at large.

Natural gas has several desirable qualities:

1) It is an excellent internal combustion engine fuel. It has an octane number of 130 and is clean burning, so a longer engine life can be anticipated. As a gaseous fuel, it should give much easier cold weather starting and better fuel economy while the engine is warming up;

2) As a transport fuel, natural gas is environmentally attractive. Its combustion causes considerably less hydrocarbon pollution than gasoline or diesel fuel, thus improving air quality relative to conventional liquid fuels;

3) Natural gas is more plentiful than oil in Canada and, in recent years, discoveries of new reserves have exceeded cumulative production;

4) Natural gas is an economical fuel, since the raw material cost in Canada, and indeed world wide, is lower than oil on an equivalent energy basis.