

Oil and Petroleum

week, after communication with the federal government, as if federal approval was a very minor detail.

This is a project of vital importance to the future of Canada's energy supplies, one over which the federal government already has legitimate jurisdiction, yet all the government's statements have been either deliberately ambiguous or completely shrouded in secrecy. The only facts about this hydroelectric project and the enriched uranium plant to be made public have come from the president of Quebec Hydro, who has indicated that such a plant, if built, would cost over \$3 billion, would use at least 2,500 megawatts of electricity a year and 18,000 tons of uranium oxide annually. We would be using one vast energy resource to create another form of energy—and all for export. If such a plant to enrich uranium were built with no thought given to our domestic needs, to the supply of the Candu reactors in operation or planned throughout the country, we would use up all of Canada's known uranium reserves within 22 years after the plant had begun operation. To date the government has taken no firm stand on this project. It has made no move to meet its responsibilities as the custodian of the country's uranium resources. Yet in this bill it is setting itself up as the national custodian of our oil and natural gas resources. One can only ask: what can justify this move?

The fourth area in which the government's record must be examined to see if there can be any justification for this bill is in the field of energy conservation. The government announced last week that it is to spend a million dollars on promoting energy conservation. Is this going to amount to anything more than a glossy, public relations campaign designed to put the pressure on individual families to conserve energy, in the absence of any positive action on the part of the government itself to conserve energy? For instance, the government is pushing ahead with the construction and utilization of airport facilities such as Mirabel and Pickering and larger jets, concentrating on a mode of transportation which uses far more energy per passenger mile than alternative methods. Investing massive amounts of our money in facilities designed to support greatly increased use of aircraft which use 2½ times the amount of energy of other modes of travel does not make sense. It is a classic example of dull thinking, imagining the future to be an extrapolation of the past, assuming that our metro areas will grow and grow when all the evidence is that such growth cannot be sustained.

How much more sense it would make to spend that money to achieve similar objectives, that is, the ability of Canadians to travel, with much less energy. How much more valuable it would be to improve the country's railways, stop the policy of branch line abandonment, improve the right-of-way of the Turbo, and participate with the governments of Ontario and Alberta—and, I hope, other provinces—in their admirable and pioneering efforts to develop various forms of urban transit.

There are other areas in which the government has failed to act, areas in which the government has responsibility to conserve energy, particularly with regard to petroleum products, where so far it has failed to provide direction or leadership. In his last budget speech, the Minister of Finance stated that the tax on heavy cars is

designed to conserve energy. I wonder how much energy he thinks it will conserve. How many potential buyers of a Cadillac de Ville will be turned toward a lighter vehicle by a tax saving of \$250, or how many buyers of Oldsmobile 98s will be discouraged by a tax of \$135? This tax is a smokescreen calculated to make the government appear to be interested in petroleum conservation without, in fact, changing anything at all. Since all the largest cars are foreign cars designed and manufactured outside Canada, it is impossible to comprehend why the government is not willing to do something meaningful in this area.

Transportation is not the only place where the government has failed to provide incentives to conserve our energy resources. The CMHC code for residential construction has not ensured nearly adequate insulation. Canada has been passing through a period of great activity in the building of houses, apartments and offices. Because the government has been totally inert in encouraging conservation, many thousands of buildings contain much less insulation than they should. Year by year, every year for decades, they will require enormous extra amounts of oil, of gas and of electricity to keep them warm—due entirely to the government's failure to ensure otherwise.

The government has failed us, too, in its blind acceptance of U.S. emission standards for automobiles. A government that lets artificial islands be built in the Beaufort Sea without environmental impact studies has decided, in the name of the environment, to apply standards designed for Los Angeles and New York to automobiles in Moose Jaw and Fredericton. What is most remarkable of all about the government's total failure in the conservation field is that for the most part these measures save money. Ian Efford, of the Science Council, has shown how much would be saved by a relatively minor reduction in the rate of increase of electrical consumption in British Columbia. If the consumption increased 3 per cent per year instead of 4.5 per cent per year, the reduction in new facilities required by the year 2000 would amount to \$2.8 billion, twice that province's annual budget. The savings possible if growth could actually be stopped would be triple that amount. Such enormous savings could be left in the pockets of taxpayers to improve their lot, or spent on improving services like housing, or both.

Not building Pickering saves money. Putting a significant tax on large cars increases revenues. Conservation measures also save petroleum for petrochemical feedstocks. So much of our present society depends on products made from petroleum and natural gas—solvents, plastic film, moulded plastics, cable insulation and, most important, the fertilizers and pesticides on which our agriculture is based. It is likely that this very long list will grow longer and that future Canadians will wish very much that their predecessors had not depleted the supplies so rapidly and irresponsibly by sending them up in smoke.

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Ten years ago, few people in the world sensed the implication of what we were doing. Two or three years ago, the imminent and acute shortage of petroleum was being predicted very accurately. But the government chose to ignore the warnings. Now, everyone sees the danger—the oil companies, the consuming provinces, the