

Energy Conservation

● (2010)

In reading the report, Madam Speaker, you no longer hear of the tertiary methods of reclaiming oil from our oil wells; you only read of the vast amount of money that would be necessary if we are to expand our industry into the undeveloped areas. Very little is said about the things that can be done to produce more oil from the fields we already have.

A great deal has been said about the tar sands and how valuable they may be in the future. We all know there is a large reserve there, and we also know it will take large amounts of money to develop the projects that are outlined in the projections that have been made to the end of the century. If it is not necessary to undertake these huge expenditures at the present time then we should not do so. I think it behooves the government to find out exactly what our reserves are and what our needs will be, rather than letting the industry make the decisions about the resources we have and what will be done with them.

It has been said that we have assisted in the development of smaller cars and have developed out tax structure from that end. I do not think it is that there is a greater saving on a small car than on a large car. In my province there is a tax concession if the car is American made, but there is no good small American car; they are inferior and the automobile companies made them that way—the Maverick was no good, the Pinto also, and the Firenza was no good. Every one of these cars was thrown together.

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): You are losing votes.

Mr. Peters: I do not really care. If that is the way I have to get votes it really does not interest me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peters: I have always considered the voters who vote for me to be reasonable people. If they cannot tell a bad car from a good one then they will continue to buy bad cars and vote some other way—they may vote for my opposition.

It is a fact, and most hon. members will agree, that the three or four small cars developed in this country have been poor cars. They have been thrown together. Ford has a small car on the market, the Capri, but it is an imported car. I doubt if you could buy a Capri in Ontario and get the tax rebate. It is not an American car but an imported one. I do not think you will get the rebate on the Colt which comes from Japan, nor on the Mazda which the Ford company is importing as the Courier of its truck line. Many of these cars coming from Europe and Japan are well engineered and designed, and have high performance. They sell at a high price in this country, and in many ways are not competitive with the big American car. The reason, of course, is the currency of those countries in relation to ours.

I strongly urge the government not to consider buying the Bobcat just because it is an American car. It should buy it simply because it is a good car, not because it is an American car that has four cylinders. The government has not given any assistance to the development of a small car in this country, yet a car with four cylinders will obviously use less gasoline than one with eight cylinders.

[Mr. Peters.]

When I studied internal combustion engines in technical school I learned there is a ratio determining the amount of air to the amount of gasoline which takes the form of combustion. This can be varied by compression ratios and temperature ratios, but you must have so much gasoline for the amount of air that goes into those cylinders. If there are eight cylinders they take twice as much as four cylinders.

I think it is foolish to expect the general public to believe we are serious about conservation when we have not done much about it. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain mentioned high, low, and peak periods. There is a very expensive project in my area which operates for a little over one hour each day in the peak period. The plant cost approximately \$50 million and was built to supply power for just one hour a day. That seems a very expensive proposition.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): A national grid.

Mr. Peters: I am all for a national grid. It seems foolish to allow the province of Quebec to look all over the world for some way of getting rid of the power that will be generated by the James Bay project when there will be a shortage of power in the Maritime provinces and Ontario. An exchange of power could readily be arranged if we had a national power grid. The hon. member who raised this point comes from a party that proposed a national grid when it was in power, but the matter has not been pursued.

Many projects could be undertaken, and I think the Canadian public would be willing to co-operate. But the government will fail in its conservation program, this country will fail in its conservation program and this country should fail in its conservation program if we do not get independent figures that will be respected by all people in Canada, both in industry and the general public. Unless we can provide those figures I think we are going to spend a lot more money on advertising, in putting out small booklets, on running an office without very much money to establish our position in conservation, when most people in Canada do not believe we have a shortage in most energy sources.

I should like to close with a point that I do not think has been mentioned today, that is, the problem of uranium. Uranium is an excellent source of energy. It will probably grow into a source that will produce perpetual power as the years go by. If plutonium can be handled in the right type of reactor it becomes a breeder and could produce tremendous amounts of power. If this is so we will have gone a long way to establishing perpetual power. But I suggest we are not at that stage, and that Canada should husband carefully its uranium industry.

● (2020)

We are doing with uranium what we did with oil four or five years ago when we listened to the oil companies. They told us we had unlimited supplies of oil, that we should sell it to the United States while it was useful and before it became obsolete as a fuel. We know what happened. Similarly I suggest that our uranium supplies are not unlimited and that most major sources in this country have been discovered. Therefore the government should not encourage the sale of CANDU reactors around the world, as they