

Adjournment Debate

possibilities are perhaps even greater in Canada than in the United States.

I have copies of a letter and petition by 40 U.S. senators calling for the Environmental Protection Agency to mandate fuel alcohol for air quality reasons, and two Bills introduced in the House of Representatives calling for the same treatment. Has our federal Government considered any such similar policy? We have not heard of one yet.

Canada has an opportunity to scratch its own back, and to take a lead not only in research and development, but eventually in marketing, before others do so.

The nations of the European Economic Community are now facing the same decision between biochemical and petrochemical octane enhancers, but they do not seem to have grasped the concept of eliminating the necessary subsidies for ethanol by blending with methanol.

The Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board should know better than any other Minister in the world, because right in his own riding a Canadian company, Mohawk Oil, has been distilling the necessary ethanol from grain and has been marketing an EM blend for several years, using fuel ethanol that comes from his own riding.

U.S. politicians are taking the lead and Canada is letting an important technological and, above all, important market opportunity for farmers slip away. Both our Agriculture Ministers seem to have been whipped into line by the writers of the western energy accord since there is no mention of fuel alcohol in that document. It would appear that while the Minister may be doing his best, the philosophy, practice and policies of the multinational oil industry have infiltrated the Progressive Conservative Government to the point where it determines this country's policy.

● (1805)

Before my time expires I should mention that the petrochemical octane enhancer, MTBE, can be a dangerous pollutant, whereas the ethanol-methanol co-solvent blends are no more dangerous as pollutants than the gasoline in which they are blended. Fuel ethanol's adoption in North America will pull Europe in with it as a market.

Canadian farmers have been asking the Government for a political commitment. The economic summit coming up in Venice and the imminent release of the western economic diversification strategy are two excellent opportunities. Indeed, there has even been a resolution from the town council of Minnedosa, a municipality some 60 kilometres from the Minister's own residence in Carberry, asking for expansion of ethanol-methanol blends. That is the home, after all, of Canada's first and, sadly, its only, fuel ethanol distillery, and its councillors have passed this motion without any response from the Minister as yet.

What has the Minister done? What will he do? If one listens to his comments of May 12 in the House, he is probably

waiting for the price of grain to go up so that he can claim that fuel ethanol is going to be too expensive.

In the short run, of course, Canada's wheat farmers need subsidies. But in the long run what they need is an alternative market for their product. That is what ethanol-methanol blending for octane enhancement in gasoline would provide.

I should also add that not only are the wheat farmers in trouble for lack of markets but that Ontario corn growers—

[*Translation*]

No doubt that Quebec corn growers are experiencing similar conditions.

[*English*]

They are looking for alternative markets for their products because they will be in the same situation as western farmers in a couple of years' time if this Government cannot do something to provide them with another way to sell their produce at an economic return.

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, first of all, my colleague mentioned earlier the so-called infiltration of multinationals within our Party. I should like to remind him that his beloved leader does not mind at all having multinationals in his constituency of Oshawa and indeed, he is proud to have them there. He even wants to protect them during the free trade negotiations. Moreover, my colleague has been referring to what the Americans are doing, but he never misses an opportunity to discredit the Americans and to say that we should have nothing to do with them, that they are not quite decent. He should listen, Mr. Speaker, because when he talks about Quebec corn producers, he shows that he does not know much about agriculture and that he would be well advised to find out what is going on. For his information and that of his colleagues, Quebec corn producers produce much more for their own needs than for export. The situation is quite different from that described by my hon. friend, because they need that production.

Nevertheless, I am pleased, and so is the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, at the interest the Hon. Member is showing for the whole issue of replacement fuel. Mr. Speaker, the House will remember that, in the seventies, even in the United States there were line-ups at the filling stations.

The Hon. Member asks a double question, one about the possibility of producing ethanol from grain, and the other about the possibility of this production giving Canadian grain producers a major alternative market for their grains.

First of all, the Government fully supports the efforts aimed at saving oil and developing other types of energy. That must be clear from the start. Through the Department of Energy,