

Canada's energy concerns

13.1

The international scene

13.1.1

Increasing world concern surrounds the adequacy of future energy supply prompted by growth in energy demand of recent years and dependence on Middle East oil.

The need for concerted action by major industrial nations was emphasized at a meeting of the International Energy Agency (IEA) chaired by the Canadian minister of energy, mines and resources in October 1977. It was concluded that "as early as the 1980s the world will not have sufficient oil and other forms of energy available." To support the need for strong measures, Canada was committed to limiting imported oil in 1985 to the lesser of one-third of oil requirements or 127 190 cubic metres (800,000 barrels) a day.

One objective adopted for the 19-member group of IEA countries was to hold total oil imports to not more than 4.1 million m³ (26 million bbl) a day in 1985 and to reinforce national energy policies to meet this objective. Twelve principles were established as guidelines to implement national measures.

Early in 1976 the IEA adopted a program of long-term co-operation to promote energy conservation, accelerate development of alternative sources, promote research and development and reduce legislative and administrative obstacles. Canada participates in this program, as well as in many of the co-operative research and development agreements. In 1978 Canada was expected to participate in the first full-scale test of the IEA emergency oil-sharing program.

In international energy affairs, membership in such international bodies as the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the North American Treaty Organization as well as participation in conferences such as the 1976-77 conference on international economic co-operation, co-chaired by Canada, and the international nuclear fuel cycle evaluation, provide the forum for Canadian activities.

A conference on international economic co-operation, in which Canada played an active role in the energy and development commissions, ended in mid-1977 with mixed results. No agreement was reached in the important areas of debt relief assistance to developing countries, protection of purchasing power for oil-producing developing countries, stabilization of commodity prices and measures for industrial assistance to developing countries. However, establishment of an international energy co-operation and development program was agreed on to ease the transition for all countries to a new energy economy as world supplies of conventional hydrocarbons from petroleum become depleted.

Discussion and consultation on emerging world energy problems continue in many international forums, such as the UN, where Canada actively promotes international co-operation in the transition to new sources, stabilizing supplies and prices, implementing conservation measures and facilitating the financing of exploration and research and development.

A list of countries from which Canada imports oil, by volume and by value, appears in Table 13.1.

Energy research and development

13.1.2

An interdepartmental task force on energy R&D was established in 1974 to develop, implement and co-ordinate a federal program of energy R&D. The office of energy research and development was set up at that time in the energy, mines and resources department to serve as a secretariat; the report of the task force *Science and technology for Canada's energy needs* was published in 1975. It recommended major increases in