

Methanol won't be practical fuel for decades

It will be years before the use of methanol type fuels produced from wood resources and municipal waste could be considered practical for transportation uses in Ontario, according to Energy Minister Reuben Baetz.

"For Canada, with our cheaper and abundant oil sands resource for future petroleum supplies, this time is well into the future," Mr. Baetz said. "The technology for methanol, ethanol and synthetic gasoline is there and the resource to produce them is there, but the economics, both today and for some years into the future, do not seem to justify the use of wood, municipal garbage, lignite or Western coal to augment petroleum as a resource for liquid fuel production."

The Minister said the most energy-efficient means of producing energy from wood and municipal waste is direct burning, not the production of alternative liquid fuels.

He added that in the event of extreme need in the mid-1980's, natural gas could be used as a transportation fuel after conversion to methanol and blending to the extent of 15 per cent with gasoline, or, with a longer lead-time, after conversion to synthetic gasoline or used directly in a compressed or liquefied form.

"This use of natural gas would be expensive and should be considered only as a short-term emergency measure if adequate alternative fuel supplies are not available," he said.

A study prepared for the government on synthetic liquid fuels found that, although Ontario's indigenous resources have the potential to produce 16,000 tonnes a day of methanol, this would require a very significant research, development and demonstration program. Such a program could not be justified because of the lower cost availability of other fuel sources. Municipal solid waste (garbage) and wood in Ontario could replace only a relatively small proportion (about four per cent in the year 2000) of the demand for liquid fuels now being met by petroleum and only at a significantly higher cost. If Ontario's lignite were liquefied, this fraction would increase to only six per cent. The cost equivalent of this methanol would be at least \$36 (1977 \$) per barrel of crude oil. By comparison, the cost of crude oil in Toronto will be \$12.75 (Cdn.) as of July 1. The world price of crude delivered to Montreal is about \$15.75 (Cdn.).

The Minister said he would study the Advisory Group's advice that no major demonstration program by the Ontario Government should be undertaken either to utilize to produce liquid fuels from wood, garbage or lignite.

The report found that synthetic liquid fuels would not be a reasonable fuel substitute in Ontario if a worldwide crude oil shortage develops in the mid-1980's. For one thing, it would not be possible for substantial

production of a liquid fuel from renewable resources to be on-stream by the mid-1980's, because of the required lead time for resource and technology development.

In addition, the economics would not justify such fuel production at anywhere near existing or projected crude oil costs for several decades. In the longer term, however, it was found that there will ultimately be a time after the year 2000 "when a combination of oil reserve depletion and price escalation will make liquid fuels from other resources (such as wood and waste) attractive."

The report says it would be more cost-effective in Canada to fully develop our conventional crude oil and oil sands resources to their potential rather than stake major investment in synthetic liquid fuels from biomass.

"With a concerted effort to develop Canadian petroleum resources, particularly the oil sands, domestic production of crude oil could relieve the supply situation and, before the year 2000 perhaps, remove the need for importation," the report says.

It is premature at the present time to select which synthetic liquid fuel (methanol, ethanol, synthetic gasoline, etc.) will ultimately be the most economic choice, the report says.

The report found that when production, distribution and automotive utilization and ef-

iciency costs were examined, straight methanol offered the best potential of the synthetics with, next in order, gasoline produced from methanol, methanol blended with gasoline, and ethanol.

It cautions that the use of methanol in transportation as straight methanol would require a new distribution system and substantial engine redesign for automobiles and trucks. Vehicles using methanol-type fuels would generally be limited in travel to areas where methanol is available since no compatibility for the utilization of gasoline would exist.

A major consideration—before Ontario or Canada become committed to use of these fuels—would be the difficulties Canadian vehicles could experience in obtaining these fuels when travelling outside the province or country.

Ethanol, even though it may be less difficult to distribute and utilize than methanol, would have appreciably greater production costs.

In addition, because methanol is more flammable and toxic than existing home heating fuels, there are still some safety questions to be resolved before it could be used for this purpose.

The Advisory Group recommends that research, development and demonstration concerning interfuel substitution, with particular reference to the matching of fuel and application characteristics, be supported by the Ontario Government in conjunction with industry.

The research program should also provide a technical and economic information base for the long-term possibility of production of a liquid fuel from wood.

It also recommends that the Ontario Government continue its experimental tree-plantation program, and develop an inventory of land suitable and available for such plantations in terms of land location and land quality.

As a complementary approach to increasing the production of wood through tree plantations, the Advisory Group recommends that pro-

cedures be investigated by the Ontario Government and industry for the enhancement of existing forest production.

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Local bull shows top performance

A Simmental bull owned by a Norval company showed top performance at the Arkell Bull Performance Testing Station recently.

The bull gained an average of 4.9 pounds per day over the 140 day test. The gain was indexed at 133 which is 33 percent above the average for the base group.

The bull is the product of a "transplant," and is owned by Modern Ova Trends Ltd. The company specializes in the breeding of the bulls by means of transplanting fertilized eggs into a grade cow.

The graduation ceremony will be held at 7 p.m. in Sheridan Hall at the Oakville campus of the college. Trafalgar Rd. George Farrow, vice-chairman of the Sheridan College Board of Governors, will be master of ceremonies and Sheridan president John M. Porter will address the graduating class.

—Some local industries are on holidays this week.

A Milton woman, Elizabeth Ann Reddoch, will be among the 74 students graduating during the fifth annual convocation of the Sheridan College School of Nursing Aug. 4.

The School of Nursing became part of the college in September, 1973, when the provincial government placed all nursing schools in Ontario under the jurisdiction of community colleges. It is located at Sheridan's Credit Valley Campus in Mississauga.



OWNED by Modern Ova Trends Ltd., in Norval, this Simmental bull exhibited top performance recently at the Arkell Bull Performance Testing Station. Bulls are performance tested under the supervision of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Eager to learn French lad goes on exchange

Eleven-year-old Paul Rowan, who is participating in a bilingual exchange program, is eager to learn French so he can become an airline pilot when he grows up. Pilots are required to be fluent in English and one other language, Paul says.

Paul, whose father, Rick Rowan, works for Gulf Oil of Canada, jumped at the chance to apply for the company's exchange program. In addition to learning French, Paul says he "wanted to meet a new person and have him come over."

The program runs for four weeks. The first two weeks Paul is host to Mark McAuley, also 11, from West Island, a suburb of Montreal. Mark arrived July 9. From the 24th, Paul will be Mark's guest in Quebec for two weeks.

One day each week the boys take part in activities planned by organizers of the ex-

change. The first week it was a visit to Niagara Falls and the lift locks; the second week, a visit to the Science Centre, Black Creek Pioneer Village and the CN Tower.

The rest of the time they spend in family activities. Paul and Mark have been on outings with the Rowans. Living in a rural setting is new to Mark and he is enjoying playing with the Rowans' dog and rabbits. Active in sports, Mark says his ambition is to be a "sports player." But he hasn't decided whether it will be in hockey, soccer, basketball or football. Paul is involved in sports as well.

Mark already is bilingual as are both his parents. They live in a predominantly English area, but Mark's parents have enrolled him in a French school. He has been busy teaching Paul some French, and both are tickled with Paul's newly-acquired vocabulary.

Because too few Quebec youngsters were registered in the exchange, Mark was allowed to join although no one in his family works for Gulf.

Joy Rowan, Paul's mother, is also eager that her children learn French and was delighted when the company announced its exchange program.

In response to a question about French immersion, Paul says he would have liked to have had the opportunity to enrol in a French immersion program in the first grade.

A total of 80 youngsters are participating in the exchange — 40 from Ontario and Alberta, and 40 from Quebec. The Quebec participants are teamed up with their counterparts in either the Toronto or Calgary areas, with 20 going to each province.

To qualify, applicants had to write a 300-word essay on the topic What Canada Means to Me. Every applicant was interviewed by exchange organizers as well.

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BILINGUAL BUNNIES? Mark McAuley (left) and Paul Rowan, both participants in Gulf of Canada sponsored bilingual exchange program, play with baby rabbits at Paul's place. Mark is teaching Paul some French.

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