

*Oil Substitution Act*

that Canadians all across Canada will continue to be conservers of energy and will continue to retrofit their homes in order to improve efficiency. Utilities as well will be competing with one another to help us down this path. We no longer need grants to maintain our momentum in the conserver society. The legislation before the House today is, therefore, a necessary step.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the Hon. Member's very interesting speech. I would like to read to him from the remarks of one of the Conservative caucus members, the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton), who said that he did not think there was any question that the House in general understood and supported the purpose of the Canadian Oil Substitution Program. He congratulated the Minister for bringing this legislation forward and went on to say that he hoped the Minister would consider the suggestion that he had made to improve the legislation and make it available to all Canadians, and that if so, we would achieve the conversion from oil to other energy more rapidly than this Bill could do by itself.

I appreciate that the Hon. Member indicated that it was a good program, but he indicated that it was no longer needed. In other words, he indicated that Canadians would continue to make this change on their own. What evidence would he have to support that position? As encouraging and positive a position as it may seem, does he have evidence to suggest that at a time when our economic recovery is at an all-time low, unemployment levels are at an all-time high and interest rates are skyrocketing again, people would be able to accomplish this without some encouragement from the Government?

**Mr. Tupper:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member did not provide me with the date of the comments he read.

**Mr. Riis:** If the date would help, it was 1981.

**Mr. Tupper:** That is four years ago, but that is immaterial.

**Mr. Riis:** Has the world changed in four years?

**Mr. McDermid:** Yes.

**Mr. Riis:** Yes, it is worse today than it was four years ago. There are 1.5 million unemployed.

**Mr. Tupper:** I thought I had clearly acknowledged that I believed the off-oil program was a good one and that most Canadians welcomed it at the time. Furthermore, if I was listening carefully enough, I thought the Hon. Member mentioned that the off-oil program was not available to all Canadians. It was my understanding that it was, although perhaps all Canadian home owners were not able to take advantage of it.

**Mr. Riis:** With help they could.

**Mr. Tupper:** It is my feeling, and I am repeating myself, that Canadians have entered into the conserver society philoso-

phy. We do not have grants to encourage us not to buy gas-guzzling automobiles. In our purchases, we are naturally flowing toward lighter and more efficient automobiles. Much of our research is directed to that area. I feel that with the current prices of hydrocarbon products and the understanding that petroleum products are not a renewable source of energy, this momentum will carry on without any need for government grants.

**Ms. Copps:** Mr. Speaker, I am a little confused about the current figures that were used by the Hon. Member for Sarnia-Lambton. I would have thought that being from Ontario, he might be a little more knowledgeable about the petrochemical situation. I understood him to say, and perhaps he can correct me if I am wrong—

**Mr. McKenzie:** He is from Nepean-Carleton.

**Ms. Copps:** Nepean-Carleton? That explains it. Perhaps the Hon. Member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. James) would be more knowledgeable about the petrochemical situation.

The Hon. Member stated in the House that one of the reasons why the program should be terminated is that the take-up was primarily from the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec while in fact statistics show that in 1983-84, the take-up from the Province of Ontario was 20 per cent. Does the Hon. Member feel that a 20 per cent take-up means that there was too much of a take-up from the Province of Ontario? If not, why did he state that as one of the reasons for supporting the decision to terminate the provisions of the Act?

**Mr. Tupper:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the Hon. Member was listening to me carefully enough. The point I was making was that since the inception of the program, it was not used equitably all across Canada and that the great bulk of its use was in the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario.

The point is that in western Canada, and I am repeating myself, much of the conversion to off-oil or off-fluid petroleum products had already taken place. They were already in large part using natural gas in the prairie provinces. In eastern Canada, there were no other less expensive fuel sources available other than fluid hydrocarbons and possibly fuel wood. Natural gas was not available to them. In Atlantic Canada, electrical energy is extremely expensive. The point I was trying to make as part of my argument is that the program was not used equally all across Canada.

**Ms. Copps:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, according to the documents from the Department dealing with the program, the take-up has been highest in the Provinces of Manitoba and Quebec. I would like to ask the Hon. Member if he feels that Manitoba is not part of western Canada.

**Mr. Tupper:** Mr. Speaker, I clearly regard Manitoba as being a part of western Canada. Her source of information must be much different from mine. I have been chatting with officials from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources in the last 10 days on that very topic, and I am thoroughly confident that my data is correct.