

institution—90 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. Here again, the sharing formula can be changed by order in council, so that the Minister will not have to come before Parliament to ask for amendments.

Similarly, the ceiling on the over-all amount of the loan under the program can be changed.

In my opinion, that is enough to create uncertainty among people who might benefit from this program. How can anyone seeking a loan repayable over a term which might run to ten years not be concerned over the possibility that the loan conditions may be changed while it is still outstanding?

I suggest that the Government, by creating such uncertainty, is going against its own policy, which is to favour the private sector.

Yet it would seem that the Government has given up about job creation, relying instead on the private sector to pick up the ball. It is rather strange that the Government has chosen to limit the benefits available to small business—the major source of new jobs in Canada—under the small businesses loans program.

To sum up my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I can say that we agree to have Bill C-23 referred to the committee because we feel that it does have a few good points. However, we will try to improve this measure and delete those provisions which we think will not serve the interests of small business in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, those are the few remarks I wanted to make on behalf of my Party.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Stevens, seconded by Mr. Hnatyshyn, moves that Bill C-23, an Act to amend the Small Businesses Loans Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Regional Development. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Regional Development.

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OIL SUBSTITUTION AND CONSERVATION ACT CANADIAN HOME INSULATION PROGRAM ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. John Wise (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that Bill C-24, an Act to amend the Oil Substitution and Conservation Act and the Canadian Home Insulation Program Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Oil Substitution Act

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-24 provides for the termination of the Canada Oil Substitution Program or, in the jargon of this place, "COSP", on March 31, 1985, and for the phasing out of the Canadian Home Insulation Program, or "CHIP", by March 31, 1986.

It is essential, Mr. Speaker, that Parliament should weigh the issues involved when such programs are created and it is also essential that Parliament should weigh the issues involved when the time comes for such programs to be withdrawn. I do not believe that anyone has worked harder to establish this principle than the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Andre). You may not remember, Mr. Speaker, though many in this House will, that four years ago the Hon. Member for Calgary Centre, now Minister of Supply and Services, challenged an attempt by the Liberal Government to escape Parliament's scrutiny of these very programs. At that time he obtained a landmark ruling from Madam Speaker that these two Acts, and eight other spending items, had been brought improperly to the House as part of non-debatable appropriations. As a result of the ruling, the Government of the day was forced to introduce separate Bills to create COSP and to extend the life of CHIP. I am pleased to be acting in the spirit of that decision by introducing legislation so that the amendment of these Acts can be properly debated in this House of Commons.

• (1125)

The Government's intention to make these changes was announced by my colleagues, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) and the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret), last November 8. Since then we have all had the chance to assess the reaction to these plans. I think it is quite clear that the people of Canada, as well as those involved in providing materials, equipment and services for residential oil substitution and energy conservation, acknowledge that outright consumer grants for these purposes are something this Government of Canada can no longer afford. A large potential exists for further oil substitution and energy conservation in the residential sector, and the pursuit of that potential remains an important priority for Canada. But at a time of restraint the Government must find less costly ways to support these objectives. I will return to this subject later in my remarks.

Under the off-oil program introduced in 1980, taxable contributions of up to \$800 were provided towards the cost of converting oil heating systems to natural gas, electricity and propane, as well as to wood and other renewable energy resources. The existing legislation provided for a termination date of December 31, 1990 for the program. The amending Bill changes this date to March 31, 1985. The Minister has provided a limited exception which will allow applicants a further three months, until June 30, 1985, to complete their conversions if they had signed contracts prior to the November 8 announcement and if they faced difficulties in getting the work done by March 31. She has also waived the need for inspections to be completed by March 31, in recognition that backlogs of inspection requests may incur in some areas.