

seconded by the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary (Mr. Whittaker):

That this House instruct the CRTC to immediately withdraw its decision not to license channel 4 Spokane, transmitted by the Arrow Lakes Television Society into the town of Nakusp.

Mr. Speaker: Presentation of such a motion pursuant to the Standing Order can be done only with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ENERGY

CONSERVATION—GRANTS FOR HOME INSULATION—REASON FOR TAX EXEMPTION ONLY TO NOVA SCOTIA AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources who, in his latest bit of electioneering, characteristically made a very important statement outside the House. In view of the fact that the home insulation grants in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are not taxable and have a ceiling of \$500 as opposed to a maximum of \$350 which is taxable under the program just announced by the minister and his colleague, is the government prepared at the very least to afford the same tax exemption privileges to the other provinces as apply to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and, if not, why not?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions I have made it very clear to the House that we have received representations from the two provinces of Nova Scotia and P.E.I. respecting their electrical costs and the very heavy increases in costs which can be associated with their dependence on foreign oil for the generation of their electricity. They are in a unique position. There is no other province that comes close to them. I think Nova Scotia has something close to 66 per cent of its electrical energy generated by oil. The next nearest province is down to about one third of its electrical energy from oil or one half of that amount. P.E.I. and Nova Scotia are in a unique position and for that reason we felt they should continue to have those particular benefits unchanged, and that the benefits that we are offering to the rest of Canada should recognize the unique position of those two provinces.

CONSERVATION—GRANTS FOR HOME INSULATION—SUGGESTED DELAY OF PROGRAM TO CONSULT PROVINCES

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): A supplementary question. I submit that the disparities in the two programs are

Oral Questions

not justified by the facts. As the minister well knows, it has more to do with politics. Therefore, I should like to ask the minister: in view of the fact that two of the provinces, Alberta and Ontario, have already expressed serious reservations over the program and have been critical over the lack of consultation and infringement of provincial rights, and given the fact of this lack of adequate consultation and unseemly haste in implementation, is the government prepared now to postpone the starting date of this program in order to give the provinces more time for this program in terms of legislation and the necessary budgetary revisions which will be necessary?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, let me try to deal with some of these questions of consultation. It seems to me that this is a very strange claim on the part of the province of Ontario, for example. Prior to the last energy ministers' meeting, which was on May 11, I circulated to all energy ministers who were to attend that meeting my interest in hearing from them what they were planning to do and what they had done in respect of energy conservation. It was indicated that it was going to be an important agenda item, which it was. Reference was made, in the press interviews following that ministers' conference to a national insulation program. There were a great many questions from your side to the opposition side of the House, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The Speaker's side of the House?

Mr. Gillespie:—which ensued during the following weeks—were we or were we not going to introduce a national insulation program? At that time I indicated that discussions were going on between ministers on this side of the House. I pointed out that it was a very expensive program, and we wanted to be sure we could afford to offer it to Canadians on a reasonable basis.

Before any announcements were made, I entered into substantial discussions with all the energy ministers and their premiers. There were discussions between officials of my office and the various offices of the provincial government. I can understand why the province of Ontario might be a little concerned. They were in the middle of an election at that time, which the hon. member may remember. They put forward a loan program which they said the banks were going to administer. This may be a very useful supplement to our program.

An hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Gillespie: I do not see it, in any way, as replacing the grants program. It may be a useful supplement in that those who need additional funds may be able to get them. I leave it to the Ontario government to decide whether they are going to go ahead with that. I do not accept their charge that in some way we have stolen their program.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the minister did receive replies and he received alternative proposals which he ignored.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!