

Motions

would phase it out. This has to do with an announcement made by the Government through press releases. In other words, the Government operates by press releases rather than Order in Council and regulations duly adopted by the Government. I fail to understand what is so frivolous about that. I think it is a serious point. The point of the debate this morning was to ensure that the Government did not repeat the procedure of passing regulations after the fact. What does the Member think is frivolous about that? What is so frivolous about asking a Government to operate in a good and legal manner?

Mr. Friesen: There is nothing frivolous about trying to keep the Government on its toes. That is the job of that committee and it ought to do it with vigour and it ought to report its findings to the House. However, I seriously question the need to debate, for two hours, a report on a program which is no longer in force. There is no way to turn the calendar back.

I agree totally with the Member that it is the job of that committee to keep the Government on its toes and to ensure that its procedures follow the books and are in order. We ought not to have government by press release. However, this was not; it was simply forewarning. The Government did file the necessary Orders in Council. If Members were really serious about this report they would have had concurrence in the committee to file this report, including Standing Order 44, which would have called upon the Government to rescind. The very fact that they did not implement the provisions which have muscle indicates that they were not very serious about the report in that sense. I think it is unfortunate that we have spent two hours debating something which cannot be changed.

Mr. Waddell: Did the Hon. Member receive any applications for this grant between January 1 and January 17 in his office in Surrey? If he did, what did he tell the people? Were they eligible for 60 per cent or 33 per cent?

Mr. Friesen: I thank the Member for thinking that I have an encyclopedic and photographic memory, but I cannot answer that question.

Mr. Len Gustafson (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that in the phasing out of the Canadian Home Insulation Program some householders were treated unfairly. Nothing can be further from the truth. The fact is that the Minister and her officials made special provisions in the phasing out process to ensure complete fairness for homeowners. The plain and simple reality is that the actions taken by the Hon. Minister were well within her mandate and 84,000 additional households qualified for the CHIP grants because of the Minister's concern for fairness. The concern of the Minister for the additional householders during this transition period should be significantly noted.

The phasing out of the Canadian Home Insulation Program was undertaken with fairness and market responsiveness as top priorities after consultation with the insulation industry. The facts are these. On November 8, 1984, in the spirit of restraint

in government spending, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) announced the phase-out of the CHIP program by March 31, 1986, and a reduction in the rate of contributions from 60 per cent to 33-1/3 per cent of eligible insulation costs. On November 9, 1984, the Minister announced that the lower rate of contribution would be implemented effective January 1, 1985.

On November 16, 1984, in recognition of the need for flexibility to allow both consumers and insulation contractors to meet the phase-out deadlines, the Minister announced that potential applicants would register their intention to have insulation work done. This registration process was available until December 31, 1984, and the work had to be completed by March 31, 1985. This ability to register was a special provision not contained in the standard rules of the program and was evidence of the Government's willingness to be fair and flexible. On January 17, 1985, the Order in Council was passed enacting the change to the regulations. Until January 17, 1985, all applications received, accompanied by proof of work done, were eligible for the 60 per cent level of contribution.

The Minister's objective was to devise an orderly, fair, and flexible phase-out of the CHIP program. The Minister extended the program for a full 17 months beyond the initial notice of its termination, providing a generous and responsive transition to the lower contribution rate, and responding to the realities of the market-place by consulting with and receiving the support of the National Insulation Contractor's Association.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Not only is the Hon. Member reading his speech, which is against the rules, but he is reading the same speech which the Parliamentary Secretary gave. That is not debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is out of order.

Mr. Gauthier: It's the same speech. He reads better than the Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. Gustafson: Mr. Speaker, the situation in the House is that the Opposition is wasting time after the Minister acted in the best interests of the people of the country. If you will allow me, I will continue.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member refers to the Opposition wasting time. The Conservative members of the committee unanimously supported this report and I hope the Parliamentary Secretary will correct that reference.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is not a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: No, but it is a good point to keep in mind.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I hope Hon. Members will allow the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to continue. He