

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 4, 1985

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

OIL SUBSTITUTION AND CONSERVATION ACT CANADIAN HOME INSULATION PROGRAM ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Thursday, February 28, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wise (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) 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.

Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today on Bill C-24. However, it is a pleasure which I would rather forgo, because in a sense I am an alumnus of the energy conservation programs which were established in 1981. I lived in a house which had been reinsulated under CHIP by the previous owner. I also took advantage of the program to upgrade a second house. I have a warm feeling for the program which dissipates when I look at the proposal to eliminate these programs.

CHIP provided for the upgrading of insulation in homes. It was an effort to conserve the precious resources of oil and petroleum products which have done so much to contribute to the economic development of Canada, and to our comfort, both in the home and in the workplace. Of course, those resources have finite limits and must be conserved if our children and our children's children are to benefit from those resources.

The Canadian Oil Substitution Program is one of which I have not been able to take advantage. At one point my wife and I thought about taking advantage of the program, but we realized that an election would be held in a matter of months and, therefore, conserved our financial resources. Nevertheless, I feel in a sense that I am an alumnus of the program, the termination of which we are now debating.

What were the benefits of the Canadian Oil Substitution Program and the Canadian Home Insulation Program? According to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Canada is saving approximately 42,000 barrels of oil per day, or 15.3 million barrels per year, as a result of

COSP. That is enough oil to heat 650,000 homes a year. It represents an energy saving of approximately 2.8 per cent of the country's total oil consumption.

Under COSP, a household which converts from oil can expect a return on the investment in a period of two to three years. However, the benefits of COSP were not limited to the saving of oil. Naturally, there was a reduction in the oil bill, but there was a stimulative effect on the awareness, consciousness and understanding of people in the country with respect to energy conservation.

I must take issue with the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Tupper) who seemed to believe that this particular egg preceded the chicken. I know from my own experience that until the federal Government established these programs and the financial incentives and information which were included with the application packages, I was not aware of the potential for energy saving which they have promoted and realized. Of course, it is all very well for those who were professionally engaged in that field to say that the knowledge always existed. However, the communication of the knowledge to the people who were making the decisions—in this case, the home owners of Canada—was crucial. That knowledge was given a real impetus with the introduction of COSP and CHIP.

The effects of the elimination of COSP and CHIP will be considerable. I was surprised to hear some Members of the House addressing this matter without raising the effects that the elimination of the programs will have on employment in Canada. In terms of 1979 dollars, for every \$1 million spent on the Canadian Oil Substitution Program, 30.5 person-years of employment were created. As a result of the grants alone, 16,750 person-years of employment were created between 1981 and 1985. If that figure is combined with the expenditures by householders and home owners, the figure comes to over 50,000 person-years of employment for the same period. Officials at the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, have stated that if COSP had lasted for its planned duration through 1990, \$650 million would have been spent on the program and a rough estimate of the employment lost in that period by the elimination of the program would be 59,000 person-years.

● (1110)

These figures, Mr. Speaker, are serious. They are serious in good times but they are doubly serious in times of rising unemployment when it is extremely difficult for youth to get their first job and the necessary training. One of the advantages of this program which I saw at first hand was that it enabled young people to work as assistants to retrofitters and