

basis across Canada so that those on the east coast will have the same access as other Canadians to the supplies necessary to heat their homes.

Mr. Roy MacLaren (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Halifax West (Mr. Crosby) is understandably concerned about the impact of oil price increases on consumers, particularly as they may affect low-income people in the maritime provinces whose annual home heating bills approximate \$800.

I appreciate this concern, and the government is fully aware that the fuel price increases which inevitably must take place could create hardships for a number of Canadians. For this reason the government is including a number of programs in its energy planning to alleviate the burden of rising energy prices. I should like to refer briefly to two or three of those programs.

The supply of natural gas to the maritimes is a matter of high priority for this government. Gas supplies to the maritimes will be provided at the earliest possible date. The Atlantic region is fortunate in its future supply opportunities because gas could be supplied from either western Canada, east coast offshore, or the Arctic islands, or a combination of all of those sources. In any event, we can expect by the mid-1980s at the latest that natural gas will be available to maritime residents.

Nova Scotia has important coal resources. Several programs will be implemented to provide for the use of this coal in electric power plants in place of high cost imported oil. As an example of the type of developmental research now under way, combustion plants which use local coal are planned for Summerside, Prince Edward Island, Dartmouth, and Point Tupper, Nova Scotia. Plants at these locations will be converted to coal and will be equipped with facilities which will permit them to burn the high sulphur Cape Breton coals without resultant environmental hazard.

The federal and New Brunswick governments are co-operating on an assessment of New Brunswick peat resources to determine their feasibility for use as a replacement for imported oil in the generating of electricity.

● (2210)

Even with rising fuel costs annual fuel bills can be kept close to present levels with great attention to conservation measures. The federal government's home insulation program is proving to be very beneficial in this respect. The grants available enable home owners to insulate their homes resulting in fuel savings in the range of 25 per cent to 50 per cent. Such savings cancel out a significant part of heating fuel cost increases.

NUCLEAR ENERGY—INQUIRY RESPECTING NUCLEAR POLICY—
REQUEST FOR TABLING TERMS OF REFERENCE

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, as you fully appreciate, proceedings on the adjournment of the House of Commons are reserved for those of us who ask

Adjournment Debate

questions of the ministry and who are dissatisfied with answers received during the course of the question period. The particular topic I intend to raise this evening is a prime example to you and to all here of the kind of inadequate and ridiculous responses one gets from the minister of energy from time to time with respect to very important matters in our nation's affairs.

Mr. Speaker, you may recall that the government of which I had the honour and privilege to be a part, initiated and brought forward in the name of my colleague who is in the House tonight, the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker), the terms of reference for a national inquiry into nuclear policy of our country. The purpose of that proposed inquiry was one that has been sadly neglected over the course of many years of Liberal administration. The federal government, which claims to have jurisdiction over matters relating to nuclear policy, was virtually the only government which did not consult with the people of our country, give leadership or get its own act into line with respect to national policy; it lacked the will and motivation to take an in-depth look at the policy which should be developed for our country in terms of nuclear industry both domestically and internationally. The terms of reference we brought forward and presented to the House for debate and reference to a committee composed of representatives of all parties in the House were broad; they dealt with the issues which should be dealt with in terms of national nuclear policy and they received the general acclaim of all people within the industry as well as the general public concerned about these matters.

I should point out that in addition to the broad basis on which the inquiry was to be held and the broad terms of reference, there was provision for this inquiry to report and make its recommendations within one year. I think that is significant when one looks at what is happening today in respect to this government, which is taking no action, no initiatives and no steps other than to reverse itself at every opportunity.

I raised my question initially with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and he indicated to me that the energy issue is of such pressing concern to the government that it could not take the time for a national inquiry and that such an option was out of the question in so far as his government was concerned. Instead, he said they would have what is termed "an internal inquiry". I subsequently raised the matter on June 11 with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) during the course of the question period that day. I asked him what the terms of reference for his internal inquiry might be, what would be the provisions with respect to public input and what kind of inquiry was envisaged. I asked him to describe it generally and to make some announcement. Indeed, I asked if he would table those terms of reference in the House. In his response the minister indicated that the policy was being reviewed, that there was no formal task force that would be set up with specific terms of reference but that if I wanted further details he would certainly give them to me. I took the invita-