

the Opposition but members of the public that the legislation is necessary.

I ask Hon. Members opposite to live up to the many promises they made during the election campaign, one of which was to consult with Canadians before taking action. When the legislation was originally introduced and put in place by the previous Government, in effect there was a contract of sorts with Canadian people. They were told that two programs would be put in place, that subsidies would be forthcoming from two particular programs, and that specific dates would be inserted in the legislation to tell people how long the programs would last. In effect, what the Government is suggesting breaches that contract with Canadians.

It is true that there was some advance warning to Canadians indicating that the programs would be ending, but I submit that sufficient advance notice was not given. In order for Canadians to budget adequately with respect to home repairs and other expenses relating to upgrading their homes and heating systems, more advance notice is necessary.

In conclusion, I ask Hon. Members opposite to give some very serious consideration to adopting the amendment in order to delay the matter for at least six months. I am sure each and every Member opposite has many home owners in his riding who have taken advantage of the legislation and others who would like to take advantage of it. We know for a fact that many people have converted from oil to other forms of fuel. Also we know that there are many other people who would like to take advantage of the program but cannot because it will end at a very early date.

I thank the House for the opportunity to express my concerns with respect to Bill C-24. I hope the Government in its wisdom will reconsider its actions.

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C-24, an Act to amend the Oil Substitution and Conservation Act and the Canadian Home Insulation Program Act. I think the use of the word "amend" is a little in error because the effect of this Bill will be to kill two very valuable programs of which many Canadians have taken advantage in their desire and concern to enter into programs of energy conservation. That is all the more the pity. In fact, if anything can be said about conservation measures, it is probably that they have been effective and have worked well. The Government is now stepping in to kill something of great advantage to many Canadians.

In my own constituency many people have spoken to me about the effect of this Bill and about their plans to upgrade their residence, to get off oil and on to some other alternate source of energy. Many of the arguments I have heard over the past several weeks during which the Bill has been before the House and prior to that when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) announced his intention to introduce this measure in his economic statement, have been in complete opposition to what the Government is doing. I heard a government Member indicate earlier this afternoon that he felt there were far too many subsidies given by the Government to Canadians. I

would readily agree with him, certainly in the way that this Government and previous Liberal Governments have handed out millions, if not billions, of Canadian taxpayers' dollars to the corporate sector. It is questionable as to whether or not ordinary Canadian taxpayers have benefited as a result.

The same argument cannot be made for this type of program. It has been well used. In his speech, the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) made some excellent points about the value of the program, not only to individual taxpayers but in terms of the Government representing taxpayers across the country.

A good question to ask is: How much money will we spend to find the last drop of oil in the country? "The last drop of oil" is a definite way of putting it because it is a non-renewable resource. It is totally wrong for the Government to develop policy, to take away from existing policy and in effect to put all our eggs in one basket in terms of energy uses.

The Canadian Oil Substitution Program was introduced in 1980 in order to provide financial assistance for the conversion of heating systems in residential, commercial and industrial buildings off oil to a non oil-fired heating system. At this point I would like to mention a telephone call that I received from an elderly constituent, 82 or 83 years old. His sight has gone and obviously he has difficulty getting around. He would like to take advantage of this kind of program, but he does not know whether at his age it would be worth-while putting that kind of money into switching from oil to gas. There are no programs available to assist him with escalating heating costs. He read some of his bills to me over the last 10 years which showed what has happened to his heating costs over that length of time.

● (1630)

Rather than the Government initiating measures to cut back on existing programs which were extremely useful to many Canadians, perhaps it should have looked at expanding the kind of assistance available. In particular, it should look at the senior citizens of this country who are stuck with oil-fired furnaces, the heating costs of which have doubled if not tripled over the last 10 years. That would have been extremely useful, not only in terms of energy conservation, but in terms of offering assistance to elderly Canadians who really could use it as at this time.

In previous contributions in this House by Members who are now on the government side but who at one point not so long ago were on the opposition benches, and who will undoubtedly be back again if they keep introducing measures like this—

An Hon. Member: It will be sooner rather than later.

Mr. Young: It will be sooner rather than later. One prominent government Member who was then a prominent opposition Member in speaking on these programs, said, and it will come as no surprise that the Member is the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton)—

An Hon. Member: He is brilliant.