

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ENERGY CONSERVATION

INFRARED CONTROL OF INSULATION MATERIALS

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, in view of the large number of thermal insulation contractors with minimal or even less expertise—some of them are even crooks—will the minister insist, before paying any grants for thermal insulation under his Canadian Home Insulation Program, that an infrared control be carried out both before and after the work is completed, in order to make sure that the installation is actually energy efficient and that the control costs be included in the total grant?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I take note of the interesting suggestion made by the hon. member, but I must point out to him that infrared tests may be rather costly and increase the cost of the program quite a bit. A system of spot checks and control is being enforced now. Every single unit is not checked, but the system seems to have worked fairly well up to now. I am sure, however, that there is room for improvement. I shall certainly look into the hon. member's proposal and report to him later on this matter.

THERMO-METRIC SCANNING PROGRAM

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, I am told that the cost of thermo-metric control would be around \$40.

[English]

My supplementary question is for the Minister of Supply and Services or, in his absence, his parliamentary secretary. Is the minister or his parliamentary secretary aware that officials within their department have offered their services and the recently acquired thermo-metric scanners free of charge to a Calgary development company to carry out a scanning program for that company, and that a group of public servants is being sent out, at public expense, to perform all the thermo-metric work for that company, despite the fact that there are in place in Calgary a number of infrared enterprises with the same type of equipment?

Mr. Norman Kelly (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I am not aware of the specifics of the particular program, but I will make sure that the hon. member receives an answer as soon as possible.

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HOUSING

REVIEW OF HOME INSULATION PROGRAM

Mr. Stan Schellenberger (Wetaskiwin): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and it is with regard to the CHIP program. Fifteen

months ago a preliminary analysis of the program by CMHC stated that the program was not performing up to its original goals. A study is just now getting under way. When will the minister seriously review this program, because it has great potential, in order that the study may be presented to the Canadian people so that they know they are receiving their money's worth?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the program which has now been in operation for several years had met with certain difficulties but these were solved by the responsible agencies. If my hon. colleague has specific proposals to make with regard to improving it, I should be very happy to examine and implement them if, as he suggests, it is possible to improve the program further at this time. I agree with him that this program is extremely important in achieving our objectives in the field of energy.

[English]

Mr. Schellenberger: Madam Speaker, as the minister has stated, this program does have great potential. However, there are concerns that the money is not being adequately spent and it is felt that there could be improvement. Has the program been switched to the minister's department in order that certain changes can be made? In addition, will the minister look at changes in the application of the program and new types of incentives which may be more attractive to low-income home owners?

● (1450)

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, responsibility for the program has been switched to my department. We are reviewing the program with the officials concerned, but at the present time there are no specific plans to make changes to that program, either in terms of the grants themselves or in terms of the basic administration of the program. However, if the hon. member has specific suggestions to make, I will be very happy to receive them.

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BANKS AND BANKING

REQUEST PERFORMANCE BE EVALUATED AND MONITORED

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance my question is for the Minister of State for Finance. My question is motivated by recent information which was brought forward by the Economic Council of Canada. In evaluating the performance of Canadian banks and their efficiency compared to banks in the U.S., the council found that Canadians had been overcharged by the Canadian banks to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars annually over the last number of years. Is the minister prepared today to assure the members of this House that the performance of our chartered banking system will be thor-