

on armaments. Who is right and who is wrong on this matter in a moral sense?

It is quite right to say that the CHIP and COSP programs cost the Government money in the short run. However, I am convinced that we are going to save money in the long run through job creation, more people working, more people paying taxes, lower fuel bills and lower costs of operating a home or small rental accommodations such as triplexes, duplexes and fourplexes. We are going to be less dependent on oil which is not a renewable source of energy. We have an abundance of natural gas and electricity in certain parts of the country. In my opinion terminating the COSP and CHIP programs is a backward step.

Many speakers this morning have addressed the deadline. I know that the fiscal year ends at the end of March. It is very strange that in this computerized age we cannot legally balance the Government's books by giving extensions of one, two, or three months. On March 31 there is still frost under most of Canada. It is unfair to try to force gas companies to switch over residential heating at this time of the year. It is inappropriate and unfair to the consumer.

I urgently request the Government to give a six-month extension, at least until September. In the summer time we can wait for our furnaces to be converted. In March that is virtually impossible on about 95 per cent of the land mass of Canada. I suppose in Windsor or along the north shore of Lake Erie the conversion can be made right now. However, in my riding of Brant, which is one of the most southern ridings in Canada and is only a few miles from Lake Erie, Union Gas has made the statement that there is no way it can fill all of the orders by the deadline. A lot of people are going to suffer as a result of this ridiculous deadline.

There are two or three points which I would like to stress, Mr. Speaker. The CHIP and COSP programs were excellent. Why defeat excellent programs? There are a lot of grant programs in the country which should be done away with, such as the huge tax concessions to the oil companies. We can get rid of those, but why hurt the ordinary Canadian householder who is trying to cut back on his overhead costs? Why not wait for a few months or a few years? Both of these programs are essential. They are economic in the long term. They will save the country untold amounts of money in the long term. It is a worth-while investment for the Government of Canada to continue to be involved in.

I have not heard of any changes in the American counterparts to the CHIP and COSP programs. When these programs were introduced they were world leaders in terms of making us less dependent on oil than we were a few years ago. I am convinced that by creating more jobs through the conversion program there will be more people working and therefore paying taxes, which will help to make up in the long term for what the Government may be losing in the short term. Let us not be penny wise and pound foolish. That is really what it boils down to.

I urgently ask the Government to give at least a three-month extension until the end of June. That would allow people to

apply to the alternate energy companies to have the conversion done. I hope the Government will take these suggestions into consideration and make the appropriate changes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question? The Hon. Member for Calgary East (Mr. Kindy) has spoken on the amendment. There are no questions or comments on a 10-minute speech. Is the Hon. Member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Kindy: On a question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no questions.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make my own modest contribution to the debate on Bill C-24. First of all, I support a six-month postponement for this Bill because I think the Government would be ill-advised to terminate the Canadian Home Insulation Program and the Oil Substitution Program before their expiry date.

We must not forget that the combined effect of these two programs is that Canadians are saving 60,000 barrels of oil daily, which is quite considerable, in addition to the benefits to individuals who may receive grants of up to \$500 for home insulation and up to \$800 for conversion of heating systems.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to go back in time to put these two programs in their proper context. Their history goes back to the 1973 energy crisis, when the oil-producing countries, and more specifically the members of OPEC, agreed unanimously to a drastic increase in the price of oil, a decision that had considerable repercussions internationally and resulted in a heavy outflow of capital from oil-consuming to oil-producing countries. Here in Canada, one of the most significant effects of the 1973 oil crisis was that we started to realize how limited our oil reserves actually were and that we could certainly not look forward to a future untroubled by concerns about our oil consumption. Besides making us realize that our oil reserves were not as abundant as we thought, the energy crisis also brought home to us how insecure our foreign oil supplies could be with the kind of changes that were taking place on the international oil market.

First of all, this decision by OPEC led countries to seek new sources of conventional oil that is, accelerate exploration. It also was instrumental in making countries look for alternative energy sources in order to lessen the impact of rising oil prices. Here in Canada, for instance, we had two megaprojects, and we tried to develop the oil sands. Today, however, because of downward fluctuating world oil prices, oil sands exploration projects that seemed promising have been put on hold. Because of lower oil prices, we are no longer certain that tapping these energy sources would be a viable undertaking. What would be