

[English]

HOUSING

ALLEGED RIP-OFFS UNDER HOME INSULATION PROGRAM

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Public Works, who is responsible for the CHIP program. Why is it that the government is allowing rip-offs to take place in the CHIP program, under which many operators are installing \$350 worth of insulation no matter what size space there is to fill, be it 600 square feet or 1,600 square feet, and in most cases without any ventilation?

What is the government doing to educate and protect consumers on the process of checking out the firms they use to insulate their homes? Does the minister not agree that the program has attracted firms with no expertise whatsoever in the insulation business, because of its poor design and the lack of proper policing and administration?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I can assure my friend that this ministry, in conjunction with the ministries of various provinces which have jurisdiction in the regulation of business operations, together with agencies and commissions such as the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission—of which I was a member until coming into this House and the cabinet—is actively reviewing the problem raised by the hon. member opposite. I can assure him that we are concerned about the problem, and I hope to be able to respond later that these matters have been tightened up.

Mr. McDermid: Madam Speaker, has the minister talked with some of the small businessmen, as I have, who are going out of business and are pleading with the government to cancel the CHIP program? They are saying that because of this program, uncaring and large companies are providing poor quality insulation to the consumer. Has he investigated the possibility of establishing federal criteria for installers, and a bonding system designed to protect the consumer; and if not, why not?

Mr. Cosgrove: Madam Speaker, my initial response is that this is not a matter of jurisdiction for the federal government but, indeed, for provincial agencies responsible for business operations. However, it is something I will ask the legal branch of my ministry to investigate.

● (1440)

I would hasten to say, though, that this is the first time I have heard this protestation which the hon. member has raised, namely, that people are being put out of business. On the contrary, many, many constituents are saying that this is an excellent program and I am being urged, as the minister, to allocate additional funds in the budget to provide for expansion of the program.

Oral Questions

METRIC CONVERSION

REASON FOR CONVERTING TO METRIC SYSTEM—
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, in my supplementary question I would like to go back to the subject of metrication. I was pleased to hear that the Minister of State for Small Businesses is prepared to take under advisement the suggestion of a full parliamentary review on the implementation of the metric system. However, I would like to carry my supplementary question one step further.

In light of the throne speech, in which the government committed itself to putting people first and stated that it will not accept injustices, will the Minister of State for Small Businesses tell this House why we must force metric conversion on the people of Canada, considering the adverse effects that it has on business, particularly people in the food store business, and considering that it was implemented without the proper approval of Parliament, which the minister referred to in his first answer when he said that it had parliamentary approval?

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Since the hon. member for Peterborough is asking a supplementary question, will he please be more brief.

An hon. Member: He didn't have one.

Mr. Domm: Would the minister assure this House that he will introduce a bill for the implementation of the metric system in Canada before any other cities are forced to accept the metric system?

[Translation]

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State, Small Businesses): Madam Speaker, I would refer the hon. member to the Weights and Measures Act and the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, both passed in 1971, and I should like to tell him that the government has no intention of imposing the metric system *manu militari* and that it has always been the policy of the Liberal party and government of taking care of the people first, not regulations. I told him in my first answer to his question that I would review his suggestion, and I tell him the same thing now.

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NATIONAL UNITY

REQUEST THAT FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE BE HELD
AFTER QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, I really do not know to whom I should address my question since the right hon. Prime Minister is absent. I would be inclined to put it to the former minister for federal-provincial relations, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Since the four premiers