

ment will continue with all its grants for the multinationals and it is going to allow them to raise the price of oil in Canada to world prices at the end of the month.

This is a real bonanza for companies such as Imperial Oil. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell), has calculated what windfall profits will accrue to companies such as Imperial Oil. Hundreds of millions of dollars will accrue each year as a result of this policy of the Government. Whose side is the Government on? Is it on the side of small Canadian businesses which are involved in providing insulation and the necessary skills and equipment to move off oil? No, it is not on the side of that group, Mr. Speaker. The large multinational oil companies will be receiving benefits from the Government. That is my first point, and as my friend, the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), says, it is a good point which must be made.

We must recognize, Mr. Speaker, that some communities are still in the process of receiving natural gas services. By coincidence my constituency happens to be one of those areas. In the last number of months the Inland Natural Gas Company of British Columbia, with some support from the federal and provincial Governments, has been extending services into seven communities in my constituency for the first time. Unfortunately, the thousands of families in these areas will not be able to take advantage of this program because they happen to be out of step with it.

That is why I am pleased that the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway and the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) put forward the suggestion that we should hold this legislation off for a number of months. Rather than terminate this support by March 31, it could be continued to at least the end of September so that people in communities throughout Canada can have access to this particular opportunity. It is a very reasoned amendment and if the Government believes in fairness and equity in the country, it should consider this six-month extension to give families in areas like Shuswap, in British Columbia, and Brant, in Ontario, a chance to use these programs. However, they will be cut off at the knees as a result of this very cold and callous decision by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) of this new Conservative Government.

• (1120)

This legislation also causes me some concern about our commitment to conservation. Canadians should be encouraged to become more concerned about conservation. The programs under this legislation were meant to give low and middle-income Canadians an incentive that would enable them to move off their dependency on the non-renewable resource of oil, which is becoming increasingly expensive.

The Government is not interested in encouraging conservation. It is more interested in assisting the multinational oil companies by allowing the price of oil to increase to the world price while providing no encouragement for average Canadians who want to be relieved from their dependency on this expensive form of energy. We should recognize that this legislation

Oil Substitution Act

represents a regressive step because these programs have been recognized world-wide as a very progressive granting system that allowed ordinary Canadians to move off this dependency on oil energy.

The Government has indicated that it does not want to encourage conservation. Rather than assist Canadian-owned small businesses that participated in these programs, it would rather assist the multinationals. Such action would make ordinary Canadians question the Government's commitment to small businesses in Canada and to middle and low-income Canadians. It indicates very clearly that the support that the new Government gives is to the large multinational and transnational oil companies.

During the short life of these programs Canada saved approximately 42,000 barrels of oil per day. We have saved 15 million barrels of oil a year because Canadians have moved from their dependency on oil for home heating by using these programs. Yet they will be discontinued.

To date, nearly one million units have been converted across Canada. This is one Government program that has been a real success and has met with support from the people of Canada. The Government has eliminated a program that has been working, moved us from our dependency on oil and has assisted us to become more self-sufficient in oil production. It says now that this program is no longer required.

The Government's introduction of this legislation is a disgrace. Therefore I am pleased to be associated with my friend and colleague, the Member for Vancouver-Kingsway, who has made the point that this legislation should be given a six-month hoist so that people who want to take advantage of these programs will have another six months to do so. In addition, perhaps it will give the Government time to come to its senses and see that this is a very regressive piece of legislation.

• (1125)

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria) to whom I must respond said that if the back-benchers on the Government side had their way they would probably be agreeing with him and voting against this legislation. Sir, nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Penner: Lost your idealism?

Mr. Nickerson: The impetus for bringing in legislation such as this comes from Members on this side. How many times has the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) made the very recommendation that these two programs, the Oil Substitution and Conservation Program and the Canadian Home Insulation Program, be dismissed? The intention of the former Liberal Government was to let the program go on until the end of 1990. What this Bill would do is advance that date until the end of this fiscal year. What we have is a difference of timing. The Liberals would not let the thing expire anyway. Now they get all excited about it and say this is the worst