

Oral Questions

These are now being considered by my colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. The hon. member mentioned several points in his question. One was with regard to non-taxability of these grants. That was handled yesterday by the Minister of Finance. As to questions on regionalization with regard to inspection services, monitoring and administration of the program, that is under consideration. I expect the Minister of State for Urban Affairs to make an announcement very shortly.

Mr. Crosbie: In taking away these pre conditions, the minister has engaged in the greatest surrender since Premier Regan forced him into the program for Nova Scotia. The provinces suggested to the minister that the grants be contingent on an energy cost basis. They suggested that grants be greater in higher energy cost areas of Canada rather than selecting electricity as the only energy cost and that they be non-taxable. Is the minister stating that the government is not going to consider the non-taxability in the other eight provinces, that the grants will continue to be taxable in all provinces other than Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island? Is that the final decision, or is he going to consider changing it to a higher energy cost basis?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is going over the same ground he went over yesterday in question period. It was made very clear to him yesterday by the Minister of Finance as to the government's position with regard to taxability. It was also made very clear that the reason for the difference in the two systems, that is the system that applies in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia and the system that applies to the rest of the country, is that over 60 per cent of all the electrical energy which is developed in Nova Scotia and 100 per cent in the case of Prince Edward Island is generated from oil. It is because of that one factor, the dependence on oil with regard to electrical generation, that there are two systems across the country.

HOME INSULATION PROGRAM TO CONSERVE ENERGY—
POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVING ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has had his wings clipped by the provinces and rightly so for intruding into provincial jurisdiction. Since the minister responsible for housing is not in his seat, I will direct this question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. One area of criticism yesterday, and rightly so, was the administration of the program. A number of provinces complained about the way it is now being administered. Indeed, the location of the bureaucracy for administering in Montreal was criticized. What steps is the minister taking to improve the administration of the program? Will the administration be decentralized? What further steps can we expect to encourage Canadians to take advantage of this program, even with all its shortcomings?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered the hon.

[Mr. Gillespie.]

member with regard to the administration question. The Minister of State for Urban Affairs has taken note of the representation of the provinces and will be making an announcement very shortly. The hon. member seems far more interested in continuing some kind of a dog-fight in which some provinces wish to engage with regard to federal-provincial matters. I do not think the people of Canada are well served if we get into jurisdictional disputes, quarrelling, squabbling and that kind of thing. It is far more important for the Canadian people to see that the two levels of government can work together co-operatively, that we can both attack problems of conservation. Now that a new sense of urgency has been made manifest by the provinces, I hope we can get on with it.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, all of this could have been avoided if there had been proper consultation in the first place. The minister knows that. That is why he is in trouble with this program. What is the position of the six provinces which had to meet the unfair conditions imposed upon them by the minister which was a direct interference in provincial sovereignty? Now that Alberta and Quebec have forced the minister to sign by dropping these preconditions, what is the position of the program now, especially in those provinces which have already started implementing some of these unfair conditions?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I am awfully glad that the hon. member has asked that question because it makes a point that I was trying to make to him a moment ago. They have accepted the need for these kinds of policies. They have put into place policies which in many instances they would not otherwise have put in and would not have put them in as quickly. That is the reason.

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IMMIGRATION

REASON FOR DELAY OF DECISION IN CASE OF ROBERT EPP

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It concerns the case of Robert Epp. I think the minister had some notice and knowledge of this situation, since it has gone on since June of this year. This Canadian has moved back to Canada. One of the children of his American wife by a former marriage has some kind of learning disability. This Canadian who is now in Canada has three children in the United States, one of whom is the subject of this investigation. Why has it taken all this time to determine whether this child should be brought into Canada or be refused? Can the minister tell us what has happened in this case because the personal tragedy for this family is very great?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with the details of why it should take so long. Frankly, I do not like to discuss individual cases of this kind. Quite often it is necessary to have consultation with the provinces because in the final analysis, charges