

wick. Unemployment back home has reached unprecedented levels and we simply cannot let the situation deteriorate further, far too many people are idle as it is. Now then, the programs under consideration today do provide much needed employment. I should think that a job, temporary though it may be, is better than none at all. But there again, if we give small businesses enough time to get organized, we find out that besides creating jobs those programs have created a demand which would not have existed otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks by saying that the people of New Brunswick could still have used those programs. Lots of houses throughout the province are still underinsulated and most of them do not even have adequate and efficient heating systems. First, the programs are being phased out prematurely and, second, the Government ought to put off the deadline for at least six months to give the private sector enough time to get organized. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the Government should not ignore that possibility nor reject that compromise.

● (1220)

[English]

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to take part in this very important debate on Bill C-24. I think it is particularly appropriate that this debate is taking place the day after the Government announced a massive bail-out of one of Canada's major banks. What could be a more glaring contradiction in terms of the policy of this Government? On the one hand it is bailing out a major bank with taxpayers' money, and on the other hand it is cutting off an important program which benefits ordinary Canadians. I would like to take a few minutes to elaborate on that contradiction.

I might also note that yesterday the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) was huddled together with her colleagues from across the country trying to determine ways of making the oil industry more rich, prosperous and fat than it is now. One group in Canada which will lose on the deal which will come from the negotiations between the federal Minister and her provincial colleagues is the consumers of Canada. The consumers will lose on that deal the same as they have lost on Bill C-24.

The Government is prepared to grant massive incentives and give large amounts of money to the oil sector and it is prepared to bail out the banks of Canada, but at the same time it is axing a program which will conserve energy and assist in job creation. Surely, that is the last kind of program the Government should axe under the guise of restraint.

CHIP created more jobs than COSP, but both programs were very effective, particularly in assisting small contractors and small business. Not only has the Government cut off the benefits to people who will be affected by these important programs and the jobs of the contractors who are involved in these areas, but it now has the gall to cut off debate. I would like to commend the NDP critic for his energy and determina-

tion in not allowing the Government to get away with this attack on the consumers of Canada.

The elimination of these two programs is affected in a very draconian way. The axe will fall on March 31 and there will be no opportunity for those people who have been hoping and planning to convert to other heating systems. We in this Party introduced a motion to hoist the Bill for six months. That would have given the Government six months to come to its senses. It also would have provided six months for contractors to convert heating systems under the present legislation.

There is a variety of options which are being removed. As the legislation now stands, a home owner could convert to heating by natural gas, electricity, propane, wood, wind or solar energy. The buildings which were eligible for COSP were those which were constructed prior to October of 1980. In my constituency there are many older homes and this program has been particularly beneficial.

When I was in my constituency office a couple of weeks ago, many people from Burnaby asked me why the Government, in its zeal to cut the deficit at any price, was prepared to attack consumers when it was giving PIP grants to the oil industry, one of the most lucrative give-aways this country has ever seen. Is the Government attacking the oil industry? Is the Government asking that industry for equality in terms of sacrifice? No, the Government is attacking the little guy. That is not fair.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) last weekend said that, yes or no, sacrifices must be made and that Canadians recognize that sacrifices must be equal. Where is the equality of sacrifice in attacking consumers and in eliminating important energy conservation programs, when at the same time the oil sector is getting fatter and fatter? With the assistance and connivance of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, she and her provincial colleagues—except for that enlightened bastion of reason, truth, light, beauty and justice in the Province of Manitoba, the Government of which is holding out for a fair deal for consumers—are prepared to hose the consumers of Canada, just as the Government is hosing the consumers of the country in the Bill on which it has brought down the guillotine. Obviously, the Ontario Conservatives are leading the charge against the consumers. That kind of regressive policy will be reflected in a significant rebuke at the polls in the upcoming provincial election.

**An Hon. Member:** What about the Liberals?

**Mr. Robinson:** The Liberals in Ontario, as elsewhere, will soon be declared an endangered species.

The changes in the legislation will effectively mean the death of COSP on March 31 of this year. The goal of the program was very laudatory. It was to reduce the use of oil in residential, commercial and industrial sectors to 10 per cent of energy use by 1990. It was recognized that the program would involve a very significant degree of conversion to other heating systems, particularly in older homes which are dependent on oil. I believe about 37 per cent of older homes were dependent on oil at the time COSP was established. To date, the program