

Oil Substitution Act

abundance in Canada, would have been so massive, the saving so enormous, that home owners could have quite easily gone to the bank, borrowed money, put in the insulation, made the transfer and had more money in their pockets. That was the potential reality of encouraging Canadians to transfer from this commodity called oil to something else called wood, electricity, coal, or whatever. That would have happened. It would inevitably have happened if one had simply left the market-place alone.

Mr. Boudria: How can you possibly prove that?

Mr. Hawkes: If a person were paying \$500 to heat his home in the cold winter months, and that person found out he could heat it for \$200 or \$250, he would have an enormous monthly saving. It is certainly an adequate amount of money to enable a person to go to the bank, borrow and do the sensible economic thing. But no, Mr. Speaker, we had a government that did not believe Canadians were sensible people. Instead we capped the price of oil, exported the jobs out of the country to Mexico, Saudi Arabia or wherever, and borrowed money which our kids will have to pay back. And this was done to give to whom?

The Hon. Member for Kenora-Rainy River, by educational and economic background, is someone we would call a middle-income Canadian. He is probably on the upper edge in terms of income and on the upper edge in terms of educational level, yet he stands in this House today and says: "I like this program. I took two houses. I got two grants". That, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, is an anecdotal piece of proof positive of who benefited. That is the New Democratic Party. It was not one grant but two grants that he had. That makes the program twice as valuable.

Mr. Parry: No way. Read the blues.

Mr. Hawkes: He insulated two houses. Where does that money come from, Mr. Speaker? It comes from your children, and your children's children way into the future. That is borrowed money that was used to insulate the Member's two houses.

Mr. Parry: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My reputation for the ability to absorb provocation must have spread to the Government benches. If the Hon. Member cares to check the record, he will find that I purchased one house that had already been insulated under a grant and I insulated the second one myself.

Mr. Hawkes: I thank the Hon. Member for the correction, Mr. Speaker. He lived in two houses that were supported by federal grant money. He took advantage of it with lower fuel bills in two situations because of a federal Government program. It is incredible.

Mr. Keeper: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Member seems to be indicating that my colleague is the only person in this country who lives in a house that is supported by

federal grant money. Does he not know that housing in this country—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member will have a chance to reply after the Member's speech.

Mr. Hawkes: We heard statistics from the Hon. Member. They boggled my mind. Canadian home owners were eligible for this program and I thought, from sitting in this House for five and a half years, that the New Democratic Party cared a lot about renters. We have a large number of renters. Were they eligible for COSP? Were they eligible for CHIP? No, Mr. Speaker. Were all the senior citizens who live in lodges and public housing of one kind or another eligible for CHIP or COSP?

Would the federal Government, if it went into the market-place to borrow funds, have given the funds to the Hon. Member for Kenora-Rainy River or to the senior citizens in my riding, some of whom live very near starvation without funds to buy sufficient food? That is the business of governing, Mr. Speaker. That is really what governing is all about. There is not enough in the way of resources for us to do everything that we think we would like to do. We must make the hard choices. I suggest to the House that the only problem with this piece of legislation before us today from my perspective is that the deadline dates we are putting in are too far into the future. I would like to see them shortened. I would like to see today as the day the programs are ended. I have a sense of certitude today that in the month of March, 1985, federal taxpayers are paying 36 cents out of every dollar on interest on the public debt. When I came here almost six years ago that amount was 17 cents. We had 83 cents to spend on useful programs for senior citizens, children, family and health care. Six years later we have 64 cents, because 36 cents goes to pay interest on the public debt.

I think it is close to a crime that we have borrowed that kind of money—

Mrs. Sparrow: It is a crime.

Mr. Hawkes: —to put into programs like this to enable middle-income, upper-income and the better educated Canadians to get a grant to do something that most if not all of them would have done out of their own resources and would have done faster. They might have even done it better if we had not interfered with the market price of energy. The basic principle of letting the different sources of energy compete is what brings about the adaptation for the individual and the adaptation for the nation that is required. The minute we get into the business of regulating the price of those commodities, to making artificial the determination of what those commodities should cost, we begin to distort the natural ebb and flow. Then we begin to make mistakes, and those mistakes pile upon mistakes. This one is particularly graphic because it is current and has caused so much anguish in the country. It has hurt us so much in terms of economic development.