

Oil Substitution Act

with us. He got involved in other forms of energy in the east after the election. However, that is another matter. In any event, he decided to change the program during the course of that election. He was not successful in garnering many votes, but he changed the program.

At one point the program involved a grant of up to \$500 and 100 per cent of the cost of materials. That became subject to astronomical amounts of fraud. I brought one case to the former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, now the External Affairs critic in the Official Opposition, the Member for Saint-Maurice (Mr. Chrétien). One of my constituents was taken in by an operator under the CHIP program. He had a mobile home and the operator decided that he would insulate the mobile home for \$350. He came around one day with three tubes of caulking cement and proceeded to insulate the mobile home. The bill was \$350. He had the invoice all prepared and wanted my constituent to approve it. My constituent decided he would not approve it. Eventually the cheque came from the Ministry for \$350. I still have the cheque in my constituency office. My constituent would not pay the bill and the insulating company has yet to take my constituent to court. However, the former Minister, the present Member for Saint-Maurice, could not see anything wrong with the case. He did not think it was a case of fraud. We wanted the courts to decide it, but unfortunately no one wants to take that matter to court. There is no question that the CHIP Program created all sorts of activity in the insulation field whereby insulation contractors managed to skew their invoices in such a way that almost all of the work was billed as material, little was billed as labour, and the CHIP Program was abused and misused.

We all ought to consider realistically what services government should supply to citizens in the normal course. There are some things that people can do for themselves. Indeed, everything should be done by people for themselves as far as possible. It is the job of government to look after the sick, those incapable of looking after themselves, and the old. It is not the job of government to look after those in society who are well and capable of looking after themselves.

That is one of the principal objections to this type of program. This program is an attempt by government to tell people how to spend their money. On that philosophical basis this is a bad program because it does not ask people to look after themselves. It attempts, in the big brother fashion, to direct how people look after themselves, how they live, and how they handle their own affairs. That cannot be the purpose of government. Government has become too large in our society. The function of government must be cut back. This is a prime example of how government function can be cut back.

I commend the Minister for introducing this Bill because it is a first step in cutting back the size, purpose, and direction of government. Ours is not a government of big brother as expressed by the Liberal and New Democratic Parties. The job of this Government is not to tell people how to insulate their homes, what kind of furnace they should have, or how to spend their money. This Government expects people to look after themselves, to be prudent in their affairs, to earn their own

money, and to spend their own money as they see fit. It should not be our job to do that for them.

This program, like a number of other government programs, must be eliminated. Even a government which is prepared to say that it has an obligation to look after people from the cradle to the grave would get rid of this program because the price of energy is falling dramatically. As the price of energy falls, the spending of money on energy conservation should fall as well. After all, why spend money trying to conserve something, the price of which is getting lower all the time? Even if a government believed in directing people how to live, why would it spend money on this program?

If a government had huge surpluses it might conceivably spend money on this kind of a program in a transfer back to home owners. That would be something similar to a state dividend. However, the December and January figures which have been circulated by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) indicate that for this current fiscal year the Government is borrowing 38 cents for every dollar spent. This means that only 62 cents of every dollar we are spending is from the taxpayer while the rest represents borrowing.

• (1240)

These figures require us to look at every government program, not just the ones under discussion today. I include programs like the Federal Business Development Bank and others with respect to exports with which we are not being very efficient. It includes programs such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. We must prioritize our objectives in this country.

This particular subsidy program must be eliminated because it is no longer needed and causes undue interference in the way people live. It is a subsidy for relatively affluent Canadians. It is a waste of government funding that increases our deficit. For those reasons, I commend this Bill to the House.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I have a brief comment and a question. Why did the Conservative Party not raise its objection to these series of government programs during the election campaign if it is such an important issue to them? To my knowledge, all of their promises concerned offering more programs to Canadians, with relatively few cuts. If they are in favour of cutting programs, why was this not advocated during the election campaign?

The Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) said that I neglected to talk about the deficit during my speech. So as not to disappoint the Hon. Member, let me remind him of some deficit-causing promises made by his Party during the campaign. Hon. Members should recall that 139 Conservative promises would have increased the deficit while seven promises would have reduced it. I thank the Hon. Member for raising that point because it is important for all Members to know where the Tories stood on the deficit during the campaign.

The Hon. Member is of the view that the CHIP Program and COSP Program artificially boosted the prices of such