

Oil Substitution Act

The legislation implemented by the Liberal government was of course a complete success since the goals were almost completely met for the 1980-83 period.

Indeed, 95 per cent of the 780,000 housing units to be converted to alternative sources of energy were converted during that period especially in Quebec, where provincial energy companies have drawn up complementary programs. Conversion was very successful. Indeed, 132,000 of 244,000 housing units converted in 1984 were in Quebec. In 1983-84 alone, Quebecers received \$99,396,000 from the federal government, and they could benefit from substantially reduced heating costs. Those savings were reinvested in various areas which surely stimulated our entire economy. Are Canadians being punished for taking maximum advantage of a legislation that met urgent and real needs?

Even in Quebec where already 41.3 per cent of all conversions expected for 1990 have been made, 59.7 per cent of housing units to be converted will be denied subsidies if Bill C-24 is passed.

On the national scale now, what about the mere 37.7 per cent of projected conversions actually completed under the Oil Substitution and Conservation Act?

Mr. Speaker, not only will Bill C-24 deprive more than one million homeowners of direct grants averaging \$735, it will also drain the economy of the huge savings which lower heating costs would have generated. Each owner would have reinvested his savings in our economy and tens of thousands of productive jobs would have been created.

Mr. Speaker, the figures I have just quoted are readily available, so why did Progressive Conservative Members, from Quebec or elsewhere, fail to mention them in the House?

Once again I suspect that, through this irrational and harmful piece of legislation, the Progressive Conservative Government is trying to divert attention from its lack of planning, and especially the discrepancies in its election program.

We all know that economic development and the fight against inflation over the coming years will depend above all on our energy policies, but the Progressive Conservative Government wants to do away with one of the most essential and effective measures in that sector.

Planning for the future is definitely not this Government's forte. Our dollar is in a nosedive, the Government knows that oil prices will soar the moment Bill C-24 becomes law, yet the Conservative administration once again wants to turn us into "Oil-god" slaves.

Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that it has become impossible to govern a country without planning and serious analysis. Here again the Progressive Conservative Party shows its inability to govern and keep track of national priorities.

Does the Government not demonstrate utter ineptitude by being so complacent about our energy requirements and the need to develop alternate energy sources?

It never fails, Mr. Speaker, we have a good program like this one or like the small business loan program, so the Government puts an end to it or changes it to make it useless.

Mr. Speaker, I fear that the Government's irresponsibility will increasingly undermine our future prospects in the coming months, but I keep hoping that Bill C-24 will be shelved so that we will maintain a modicum of energy planning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pappas): Questions and comments. The Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mrs. Sparrow).

• (1410)

[English]

Mrs. Sparrow: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend commented that the oil reserves were diminishing rapidly. He is absolutely right; the conventional oil reserves are diminishing rapidly. I wonder if he really knows why this was so.

Perhaps the Hon. Member has forgotten that the National Energy Program, which was brought in by his Government in the 1980s, brought the oil and gas industry to its knees and sent many drilling rigs out of the country and many people South of the border, to Australia or to the North Sea. Those who did not leave the country went on the unemployment or welfare lines. A great many jobs were lost in this particular sector. I can also state that the spin-off effects caused unemployment to rise by some 90,000 people in the Province of Ontario.

As well, the Hon. Member's Government introduced PIP grants which were extremely discriminatory. PIP grants forced more of the natural-resource companies to explore on Canada Lands and therefore to explore in the Beaufort Sea and off the coast of Canada. Unfortunately, this took away the people, technologies and moneys necessary to develop and explore on provincial lands in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. That is why our conventional reserves are diminishing.

Another thing the former Government legislated was the 25 per cent back-in on Canada Lands after a discovery. I must tell my hon. friend that this particular legislation drove out and prevented foreign, and even Canadian investment. As a matter of fact, that program can be directly related to the moving of some \$17 billion out of the country. Before the Hon. Member goes on to say too much about diminishing oil reserves, I think he should take a look at why this is happening.

My hon. friend also said that we were covering up and not putting forth all the correct figures. Perhaps he has not been able to hear the six or eight Conservative members who have spoken in regard to Bill C-24. They have all stated the facts and figures.

As well, we are not discriminating against Quebec. The programs will be terminated right across the country. We all