

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 18, 1985

The House met at 11 a.m.

• (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

OIL SUBSTITUTION AND CONSERVATION ACT CANADIAN HOME INSULATION PROGRAM ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Friday, March 15, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wise (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) that Bill C-24, an Act to amend the Oil Substitution and Conservation Act and the Canadian Home Insulation Program Act, be now read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works; and the amendment of Mr. Cassidy (p. 3072).

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on the motion that the Bill be read six months hence. Actually, Mr. Speaker, I wish that this Bill would be read about 16 years from now so that as many of my constituents as possible could benefit from the very good programs which had been established by the former Liberal Government. These are the same programs, of course, which saw the axe on black Thursday, November 8, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) tabled in the House the document known as "The Expenditure and Program Review". Of course, Mr. Speaker, this particular document should be known as "the expenditure and program cut-back", because that is all it is. I know that the Hon. House Leader, had he prepared this document, would have been a little more forthright and honest than the Minister of Finance and would have called this book what it is. So it was on black Thursday, November 8, that the axe fell on a number of very good Canadian programs which had been established by the former Liberal Government.

I am sure all the Conservative Members in this House this morning, if they were permitted to speak without being muzzled, would speak in favour of the Canadian Oil Substitution Program and the CHIP program as well. The Canadian Oil Substitution Program has been very successful. Because of the deadline of March 31, a number of people have rushed to convert their old, inefficient oil furnaces to better systems, such as heat pumps, forced air electric systems, natural gas, wood and so forth, and it has reached a point, Mr. Speaker,

where many contractors have run out of the equipment to be installed. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney), therefore, has been asked to extend the program. Perhaps if that Minister could extend the program she would, but her boss, the Minister of Finance, won't let her. The Minister of Finance, "Mike the knife" as he is commonly called by some of us in this House, is unable or is unwilling to allow the extension to this worth-while program. This is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

I mentioned a moment ago that a number of contractors have run out of equipment. Contractors in the Ottawa area, as a matter of fact, have written to all Hon. Members in the Ottawa area. I know the Conservative Hon. Member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Turner) and the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney) have received letters but they have not raised this issue in the House at all, Mr. Speaker. Many people have signed contracts in good faith, and on time, and now will not be able to benefit from this program because of the fact there is no equipment left to instal.

There is another situation which has arisen as well. Some people have had their furnaces installed thinking that they would be eligible for the program. However, all the inspections cannot be carried out before March 31. The Parliamentary Secretary said last week that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has now agreed that those who had a completed installation by March 31, and were only awaiting the inspection, would be able to receive the benefit of the program. I find it passing strange, though, Mr. Speaker, that the contractors have not been made aware of this fact. Ontario Hydro, Ottawa Hydro and all the other agencies who are responsible for administering the program have not been made aware of this fact. It is fine and dandy that the Parliamentary Secretary, with his usual eloquence, has announced in this House that those people who had their installations completed by March 31 but had not had the inspection will still benefit, but I suggest it would help if the public servants in the Ministry as well as all other agencies concerned could be made aware of this fact.

There is another problem which arises, Mr. Speaker. When one of our constituents decides to get his furnace installed, the contractor comes in and proceeds with some part of the installation but because he is so short of components the installation cannot be completed by March 31. Although the installation is already begun, those people will not qualify at all. It is too late for them. They cannot back-track and phone the contractor to come and get the components which are already installed. That won't wash. The consumer is going to be forced to pay.