

● (1550)

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member indicated that the people he felt were taking advantage of the program were not the poor in his community but the relatively affluent, that is, the people who own their homes and can afford to insulate those homes and perhaps spend \$1,200 or \$1,500 and receive a \$500 rebate. For the people who wanted to convert their furnaces and heating systems, which would cost \$2,000 or \$3,000, the \$800 grant was only an extra. He has said that to some extent the assistance program was for the affluent. In other words, it would help perhaps not the greedy, but certainly not the needy. Could he elaborate on that further? The impression which I received was that the program tended to be used by those who could well afford to do it with their own money.

Mr. Tupper: Mr. Speaker, I prefaced my remarks by saying that to my knowledge there have been no in-depth studies done by either the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They were the two organizations which were, in large part, responsible for the administration of the program. There was no analysis done by those organizations as to who was using the program and who was benefiting from it.

I think my hon. colleague heard me correctly when I said that my impression in the greater Ottawa community, and particularly in my own riding, was that for the most part those who could afford to make the conversions on their own—energy conscious people who are fairly knowledgeable about the markets—took advantage of the program. Clearly, it was not the low-income people. The supplementary point I would like to make is that I firmly believe those people would have converted from oil anyway, regardless of the grant.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, is the Member suggesting that low-income people are somehow less energy conscious than high-income people?

Mr. Tupper: No, Mr. Speaker, that is not the point I am making.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, again my question deals with the issue of the facts which have been laid before us. In the document of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, which analyses the three-year program, it states that cost targets in Saskatchewan and Alberta were reflecting oil use in hard to reach rural and remote areas. Could the Member reiterate what he said to the House that hard to reach rural and remote areas which took advantage of the program are, in fact, the high-income users about which he speaks?

Mr. Tupper: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I am not speaking at cross purposes with my colleague. We must recognize, when looking at the statistical data on the program, that targets were set across Canada for the use of the program. Of course, the targets were different in different parts of the nation. The targets reflected local needs and concerns. Those targets were achieved in varying degrees. Some of them over-

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achieved their targets in certain years and others under-achieved. In balance, across Canada, I think most of the targets were achieved. But I would repeat that in my own riding, I have been able to observe what was going on firsthand, and without the knowledge of the thoughtful research work which has been done across the nation, my impression is clearly that it was upper-income groups which, for the most part, took advantage of the off-oil program. That is not taking away from CHIP, in which people from all income groups participated and from which they benefited.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The period allowed for questions and comments has now expired. On debate, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps).

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be in the position of resuming debate, because if government Members are tabling information upon which they are basing their decisions to terminate these programs, it is unfortunate that they do not have the facts before them.

In fact, the major take-up on the Canadian Oil Substitution Program over the three-year period was not in the Province of Ontario, but in the Provinces of Quebec and Manitoba. The Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Tupper) made the statement that somehow the take-up was high in Ontario in Quebec. First, I do not agree that that is a reason for eliminating the program. I think the Member should fight for the residents in his riding and not say that because the take-up is high the Government is going to cancel it. Second, the Hon. Member should be aware of all the facts before he supports the termination of a program which he indicated was working.

The Hon. Member will know that the targets were being achieved. He will also know that COSP was expected to run until 1990. As a result of the termination of the program five years early, thousands upon thousands of home owners across the country will not be able to take advantage of the program. For example, we could examine the potential take-up. Had the program not been terminated, in Newfoundland, in 1985, some 4,705 home owners would have taken advantage of the program had it been available. Yet this Tory Government is going to terminate it.

Mr. McDermid: It is available.

Ms. Copps: It is available, but the Bill which is before the House is a Bill designed to terminate its availability. Government Members should be aware of what they are voting on. Every government Member who has spoken today has said what a tremendous program this has been and what a boon it has been in reducing our dependence upon non-renewable resources. At the same time, those Members are agreeing to sound the death-knell for this program.

The Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton said that the people across the country who would take advantage of the program were primarily from Ontario and Quebec. How many families in Nova Scotia—which is not exactly the richest area of this country—would have taken advantage of the program? There