

Mortgage Tax Credit

Mr. Watson: Those are the facts. Disheartening as well is the fact that—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I think the committee should give the hon. member some consideration by remaining quiet until he has finished his remarks.

Mr. Watson: Disheartening as well is the fact that the tremendous sums of money which are involved in the tax loophole that this bill creates, at least \$3 billion by the end of the fourth year, will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a government that has been boasting about its intention to reduce the federal deficit to spend money in many other areas where money spent now would mean tremendous savings in the future for all Canadians.

Let us consider conservation as an example. Here are some of the things we should be doing but are not doing. There should be additional funds for home insulation available to everyone over the age of 65, regardless of the age of their homes. These people should be eligible for complete insulation updating at a cost to the government.

There should be subsidization of the conversion of our heating facilities from oil to natural gas. This is not going to be an inexpensive program, but it is one that is desirable. We do not even have sufficient numbers of people trained to do this job. New manpower programs will be necessary to train those people who will be needed to encourage and speed up this conversion from heating oil to natural gas for home heating purposes.

There should be new metering systems to encourage and permit diversification of the timing of electricity loads. Surely this should be feasible. I understand these new type meters have been in use in Europe for many years. They permit, at a reasonable cost of installation, somewhere in the \$200 range, the possibility of electricity loads for those who want to benefit from cheap electricity. Those who use electricity from eight in the evening till midnight get a special rate, and those who want to use electricity after midnight get an even better rate. This sort of evening out of electricity demand would save a fantastic amount of expenditure on the new facilities which continue to be necessary to increase our electrical production capacity.

Instead of the luxury of this bill there obviously should be shelter allowances, fuel allowances or a combination of both. Perhaps the budget tonight will contain something along this line, but the vast expenditure being proposed by this bill will make it extremely difficult for any government to put into effect this kind of necessary and, in the long term, sensible money-saving proposals.

There should be encouragement by tax incentives of company van-oriented pools and other methods of reducing transportation energy consumption. Consideration should be given to electrification of our railway systems, and we should be encouraging conversion to coal use—

[Mr. Watson.]

Mr. Blenkarn: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. We are in Committee of the Whole discussing a sunset amendment proposed by the hon. member from Winnipeg. This whole question of vans, electricity and subsidization of insulation have absolutely nothing to do with the amendment. The hon. member was called to order by the Chairman the other night on this very issue. He continues to break the rules of the House. Surely he should stay within the limits.

Some hon. Members: Order, order.

Mr. Watson: Mr. Chairman, this particular sunset amendment will be useful simply because the bill, as I have been trying to explain, is such that there will be second thoughts. I have been explaining what some of these second thoughts are going to be. I have been giving examples of these second thoughts, and the necessity of doing these things that will in the long term save Canada a lot more money. Perhaps you would permit me to finish my remarks in the few minutes I have left.

I would like to suggest that another matter we should be considering is encouraging by subsidy conversion to coal use in accordance with the highest environmental standards to ensure that such conversion does not contribute further to our already serious acid rain problem. There is a great deal to be done in the area of urban transit.

We should be looking as well at the living conditions in urbanized areas of Canada where 85 per cent of our population lives. Statistics have shown that Canadians spend 70 per cent of their lifetimes either in their own homes or in their own neighbourhoods. Surely we should be considering the quality of life in those neighbourhoods and the types of programs that can increase and improve that quality of life. Hon. members opposite are putting themselves in a position where it will be almost impossible to find money to deal with these very urgent, pressing and necessary activities to permit Canadians to achieve the kind of quality of life in their own municipalities, cities and towns to which they have a right to aspire.

[*Translation*]

It is a fact that the quality of life in the core of cities and in suburbs suffers from a lack of long-term planning and of co-ordination among the various departments and levels of government. It is a fact that a lack of long-term planning and co-ordination has given rise to many mistakes and deficiencies in municipal and regional services which are now extremely costly at all government levels and it is especially costly for municipal ratepayers to correct them. It is also a fact that the huge cost of some planning mistakes have a negative effect on the efficiency of the Canadian economy and the capacity of Canada to compete on the world market. Mr. Chairman, I wish to say in English that—

[*English*]

In spite of the fact that 85 per cent of our population lives in Canada's urbanized areas we have still not achieved the kind of federal involvement necessary to improve the quality of life of that tremendous percentage of the population. It is unfortu-