

*The Budget—Mr. Corbett*

mention that type of thing, but we are used to that approach by the government.

What has happened to the program for the conversion of oil to gas? This is probably one of the more positive points of the budget, one I would like to take a few minutes to address. It is outlined in the book entitled: "The National Energy Program". Page 56 reads in part as follows:

For conversions from oil to gas, electricity, renewable, and other energy sources, a grant of 50 per cent of the conversion cost, up to a maximum of \$800.

It goes on to say:

However, the program will take account of special situations in individual provinces. For example, the dependence of the Atlantic provinces on oil for electrical generation, although declining, precludes financial assistance for conversion to electricity at this time.

The last sentence of the third paragraph on page 57 tell us:

No one should delay action to convert away from oil.

I can only presume from this that even maritimers in this particular instance are not being regarded by the government as second-class citizens. I am very thankful for that. The sentence before that one reads as follows:

When the program is operational, compensation will be paid.

I think that is a positive step. I look forward to many maritimers, many New Brunswickers, taking advantage of the program.

Under the section dealing with the Atlantic provinces, we read on page 86:

Assistance will be provided to consumers, as in other provinces, to switch from oil to other fuels. Assistance for conversions to electric heating will not be immediately available in the Atlantic region, however.

In the province of New Brunswick more than half of its generated power comes from sources other than oil. Yet, according to this, for some reason or another New Brunswickers will be denied this program to convert to electricity from oil, despite the fact that less than half the electricity produced in the province of New Brunswick comes from oil. I should like the minister to take notice of this.

I understand that over the weekend there was a Liberal rally in my constituency of Fundy-Royal, at which time the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Cosgrove) attended as the guest speaker. A resolution was passed at that particular rally asking that the Minister of Public Works contact the Minister of Finance and implore him to allow the Atlantic region access to the same program as the rest of Canada. Obviously the implications were that they had not taken the time or bothered to read the national energy program to determine that Atlantic Canadians are indeed entitled to compensation for switching to other forms of energy with the exception of electricity. Perhaps the good minister would like to take their suggestion under advisement. I hope he will allow Atlantic Canadians the same opportunities in this nation as other Canadians. But I doubt that this will actually be a fact of life.

The minister represents a part of the country which is very rich in coal. Apparently he has lots of money to deal out and has become very generous with the part of the country he represents, Cape Breton. I think that is laudable, it is very

noble of the minister. It has been a hard pressed area in the past, and I am thankful and pleased for the people of Cape Breton that the minister has taken cognizance of the fact their coal reserves should be developed. But there are other regions in the maritime provinces which have coal as well.

In my constituency the regions of Minto and Chipman have coal reserves. Last May 2 I asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) if it was his intention or the government's intention to aid in the extraction, production and/or marketing of coal from the Minto and Chipman areas. The answer was no, that the department had no plans to aid in the extraction, production and/or marketing of coal from those areas of New Brunswick at that time. I can assure the minister that the miners and their families in the Minto and Chipman areas of New Brunswick like to eat just as well as the miners of Cape Breton. I think they should be given the same opportunities and favouritism as the minister has shown to the people residing in his constituency.

There are energy resources in New Brunswick besides coal. In Albert county there is oil shale which has been producing oil since 1922. Also there are gas reserves in that county which have produced natural gas for use in the Hillsborough area for a good number of years. Where is this mentioned in the budget or in the national energy program developed by the Minister of Finance for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources? It is conveniently forgotten, like the commitment to DREE. The government was committed to eliminating regional disparities, but it did not take into consideration doing anything additional for the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. He talked about the manufacturers' investment tax credit. This was done in consultation with his good friend and old crony, the minister. This was for specifically designated areas. Indeed, it will be interesting to see where those specifically designated areas are.

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There was no mention of the national parks in this country. We have a beautiful park in Fundy-Royal, which is suffering from a lack of attendance and has been over the last few years. I would have liked to have seen some attention brought to the plight of parks such as Fundy in order to increase attendance. But, no, not a word about it. Today it is appropriate to bring up the subject of national parks because we have park superintendents from all across this land visiting us here in the nation's capital. I would have liked to have seen some thought addressed to the plight of parks such as Fundy, but there was nothing.

What about the farmers of this country? There was hardly a mention made of farmers. The farmers are one of the most maligned groups of individuals in the nation. Yet there was hardly a word. The same thing can be said of fishermen.

And what about all of the poor people of this country? We do have them, in case the minister is not aware. There are poor people in this country who find it difficult to make ends meet and to get a meal. Where are the breaks for the little guys? Again, I should be asking the NDP who made all the rest of this possible for the people of Canada.