

Madam Speaker: Such a motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

CONDEMNATION OF PERSECUTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN IRAN—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Madam Speaker, I rise, under the provisions of Standing Order 43, on a grave matter of urgency which I hope will receive sympathetic support on all sides of this House.

In view of at least 26 more Iranians dying on Monday before a firing squad, including two leaders of the Baha'i religious sect, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Eglinton-Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille):

That this House of Commons deplores the continued persecution of religious minorities in Iran, especially the 200,000 Baha'is, and urges that this total abuse of religious tolerance be brought to the attention of the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations.

Madam Speaker: Such a motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

ASSISTANCE FOR ATLANTIC PROVINCES—DREE GRANTS

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will recall that in 1968 he had two great themes when he came into power in Canada. One was to overcome regional disparity in Canada.

I want to draw to his attention that in real, 1971 dollar terms, DREE spending by the government decreased 22 per cent between 1970 and 1978, while other government departments' spending, in real terms, rose 60.6 per cent. DREE spending is now only 1.2 per cent of total government spending, whereas it was 2.5 per cent in 1970. Whereas Atlantic Canadians earned 34 per cent less in earned income than

Canadians generally in 1974, by 1978 they were earning 34¼ per cent less.

In view of these facts, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will make a commitment that the government will give first priority to the overcoming of regional disparities in Canada. Will he make a commitment? Will he review his position on offshore mineral resources so that the people of Atlantic Canada can be given a chance to develop their own earned income now that government assistance in this way has failed so miserably despite these great efforts?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the situation in the Atlantic provinces obviously is one of disparity compared with richer parts of Canada. We have many policies to attack that. DREE is only one of them.

When we refer to the energy policy of which the hon. member talks, I can assure him that it is the policy of this government, in our energy policy in the past and in the future, to ensure that the maritimes and eastern Canada have, indeed, received equalization funds to the tune of many billions of dollars since we brought in our energy policy.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: When was that?

Mr. Trudeau: Since 1974. If we have the support of the House for the energy policy we proposed during the campaign, the Atlantic and other parts of Canada would benefit greatly—consumers as well as industry.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, Atlantic Canadians do not want to be subsidized by the rest of Canada. They do not want hand-outs; they want to earn their own way.

The figures show that despite attempts by the government since 1968 to overcome this, the proportion of earned income of Atlantic Canadians compared with the rest of Canada has declined, not increased. We are not being given the chance to earn our own way. That is what we want. Would the Prime Minister specify what new initiatives he is taking? One suggestion would be to confirm ownership of offshore mineral resources in the provinces. Let them earn their own way, rather than give them equalization.

Second, would the Prime Minister give orders to his ministry to expedite the development of Lower Churchill power resources? The reports are now in to his Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and to the Newfoundland government. Will the Prime Minister expedite that? What actions will he take to expedite economic development in Atlantic Canada—not hand-outs? They are not working.

● (1420)

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, hand-outs have certainly never been our approach. But when the hon. member complains that there is not enough money in DREE, for instance, and then goes on to say that the maritimes do not want to be subsidized, I fail to see how he is consistent in suggesting that