

Oral Questions

\$193 million in transfers that they receive in equalization, hospital insurance and medicare? Will he enlighten the people there in time for Monday's election? Are they supposed to vote Campbell for more cunning cuts?

Mr. Lawrence: Now 'fess up.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member was incomplete in his preamble when he said the Canadian people were fed up. I thought they were pretty well fed up with the hon. member and his budget, and showed that quite a bit. The hon. member is asking an electorally directed question. His sudden interest in Prince Edward Island is edifying. It will probably disappear after Monday next. However, it gives me the opportunity of saying that, of all the Atlantic provinces, Prince Edward Island benefits more from, for example, the development programs of this government.

Transfers to Prince Edward Island through DREE are very much higher than Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland for that matter. They are much higher than any of the other Atlantic provinces. There is a 15-year development plan that has been financed by the federal government to the extent of 80 per cent. It is up for renewal at the present time, and there is a request to the federal government for an additional \$80 million to finance that development program. All the fears expressed by the hon. member are unfounded, electorally directed, and if he wants to get on the bandwagon and support equalization, which is proposed in the constitutional bill, why does he not support that and help Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, is the minister saying that he does not tell the truth in his budget speeches? He said in his budget speech that he is going to save money by cutting back on transfers to the provincial governments in the social affairs envelope. Will he answer the question for a change and deal straight with the public? The public loved my budget after having seen his.

Some hon. Members: Hear hear!

Mr. Crosbie: Is the minister saying he is a man who does not tell the truth? Is he or is he not going to cut back on social transfers to the provinces, for example, in P.E.I., the \$193 million? The minister's officials are now meeting with provincial officials. They are telling them they want to save \$1.5 billion in transfer payments for post-secondary education and the like. For example, the \$701 million they are paying—

Madam Speaker: Order. I ask the minister to be brief as well.

Mr. Crosbie: My question then to the minister—

Madam Speaker: Order. I have heard the question. There was a question asked. I heard it.

Mr. Crosbie: Will the minister answer the question?

Mr. MacEachen: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Crosbie: A supplementary, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Crosbie: A supplementary, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, the minister did not understand the question.

Madam Speaker: Order.

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CRIMINAL CODE**UPDATING OF LAW RELATING TO COMPUTER CRIME**

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. We are all aware of both the extent and the importance of the computer revolution in our society. While technology has evolved swiftly, our laws have remained largely static. In July, 1980, the Supreme Court of Canada, in a case called *R. v. McLaughlin*, ruled that Section 287 of the Criminal Code, the section dealing with the theft of a telecommunication service, did not cover the unauthorized use of a computer facility. The law was proven to be woefully anachronistic. Can the minister advise the House when we can expect the introduction of legislation which will bring the law respecting computer crime up to date?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Madam Speaker, this is a very important and difficult question which involves a lot of fundamental legal issues. It is being reviewed in the department at this time. We have been in communication with the Canadian Bar Association on this subject. We are studying the problem at this time with the Law Reform Commission, and have been in touch with the provinces on this matter. It is a very complex new development in law. We are working on it. I am not in a position to tell the House when we will be ready to bring forward legislation on the subject.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: As the minister will know, the Canadian Bar Association has requested speedy action in this area. Will the minister commit himself to introducing a separate bill with respect to this matter at an early date, rather than waiting until the omnibus bill on the Criminal Code amendments comes forward at the next opportunity? Will he give specific priority to this study so that we can have early legislation?

Mr. Chrétien: Madam Speaker, it would be very helpful if the hon. member were to guarantee swift passage in the House of Commons. There are many bills in front of the House at this time and they are not being sent to committees very quickly because of time being spent on other matters.