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Ottawa, Canada.

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Voluntary conservation measures will avoid fuel rationing

Prime Minister Trudeau, in a statement on national television on November 22, urged Canadians "to study voluntary steps for conserving energy" and to support restraints suggested to them by their provincial governments.

Although oil rationing at the retail level would not be necessary, said Mr. Trudeau, a program of petroleum allocations and steps to save fuel, which would be announced in a few days by Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Donald Macdonald, would be needed to see Canadians through the winter. Mr. Macdonald was consulting the next day with provincial ministers of energy to seek their co-operation and advice in measures the Federal Government must take "to deal with the serious problem of oil supplies". The Prime Minister described as follows the background to the Government's policy on energy:

... Unless there is a sudden change for the better in the international oil situation, we think that such an allocations program will be required this winter. Its degree and duration will depend at least in some measure on the success of the voluntary restraints.

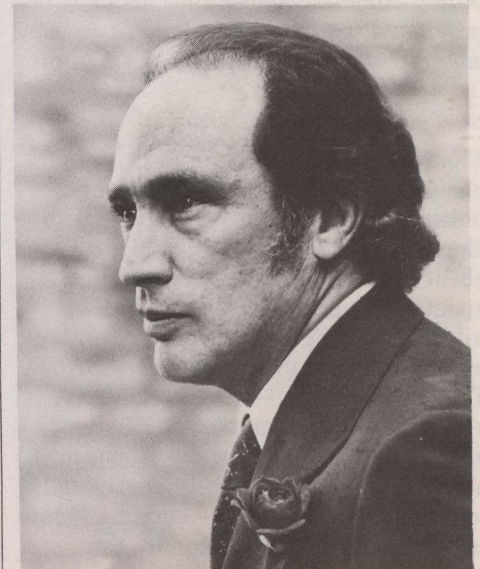
This does not mean, however, rationing books for you and your family. Our current assessment is that oil rationing at the retail level will not be necessary. I want to emphasize one other point: under no circumstances will the Government permit fuel to be diverted from those who need it most, to those who can pay the most.

I have asked the Minister of Health and Welfare to make sure that payments to people in need are sufficient to meet winter fuel costs.

If Canadians generously support the voluntary program — and I know they will — there is every prospect that shortages can be minimized throughout this winter....

Former energy policy

Perhaps I could explain some of what we've been doing by first describing the energy policy we began with. It was called the National Oil Policy — formulated by the Federal Government back in 1961 — to develop a strong, productive and profitable oil industry based in Western Canada. Remember in those days, overseas oil was so cheap and abundant, that a barrel of petroleum from Saudi Arabia could be delivered in Edmonton at a lower price



Prime Minister P.E. Trudeau

than a barrel of oil produced in an Alberta well just 40 miles away.

Nevertheless, the Canadian Government said: "We want a viable oil industry in Alberta — that is a national priority". So while allowing everyone east of the Ottawa Valley to continue buying cheap foreign oil, the Federal Government established a protected market for Alberta oil west of this Ottawa line. To the millions of people in Toronto and most of Ontario — to all of the West — the Canadian Government said: "You'll have to give up the cheaper foreign oil — to pay a bit more per gallon — so that Alberta can develop a market for its oil. That's a