

*The Address—Mr. MacKay*

patriot, Alexander Dubcek. He is reported to have said in an article by David Binder which was special to the *New York Times*, datelined Prague, "We are aiming for a truly just society." For the record, that great patriot should be given his due for coining that phrase. In passing, it is fair to say that he faced many more obstacles in establishing the "just society" than did our Prime Minister.

This afternoon the hon. member for Malpeque (Mr. MacLean) said it is unfortunate that a member of parliament, in the few minutes in which he speaks in a throne speech debate, has to cover so many subjects. As he said, our rules make this necessary. May I begin by talking of the energy situation in Canada and particularly about the energy crisis affecting eastern Canada. We in eastern Canada feel let down. Not only is the security of our source of supply of petroleum tenuous, according to reported statements by people in a position to know, but our once prosperous and important coal mining industry has been allowed to deteriorate to the point where it hardly exists.

Since there have been so many references to pipelines, and since so many have been speaking as to who thought of the pipeline and who suggested it, I think it should be pointed out for the sake of the record that paragraph 2 of part VII of the policy document considered at the priorities for Canada conference called by the Conservative Party at Niagara Falls from October 9 to 13, 1969, reads:

Strengthen the national oil policy by including a pipeline to Montreal to serve a minimum of one-quarter of Quebec needs as a security protection against the interruption of oil supplies from politically unstable areas.

Again, by way of background, let me mention some questions and answers which were raised in this House on May 29, 1970. On that day the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) asked the then minister of energy, mines and resources, Hon. J. J. Greene, the following question as recorded at page 7481 of Hansard for that day:

Mr. Speaker, would the minister advise the House whether any contingency planning has been carried out to date with respect to eastern Canada's position vis-à-vis our traditional sources of crude oil? Could he also indicate whether the low level of prices we pay for oil in eastern Canada is to be preserved under any planning that has been done?

The minister answered as follows:

Mr. Speaker, there are no plans at present to change the national oil policy which connotes that oil for the eastern market will be offshore oil. If there is any plan to change the national oil policy from its present course, then of course that would be announced in the House in the normal manner.

Other members asked questions, including the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams). One NDP member wondered, in so many words, whether Venezuela was a secure source of supply and whether any change in our oil policy was being considered. The minister said that in view of the very good potential of large quantities of economically priced oil being made available to eastern markets from offshore, consideration was not being given to any change in our national oil policy.

We in eastern Canada feel badly about the government's position and lack of policy. It is in order now for me to request the government earnestly to atone for its singular lack of foresight, and it should press ahead with construc-

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tion of the pipeline. That construction should be given greater priority than now appears to be the case. Despite the urgency of the problem, I do not see evidence of any truly national commitment for building this pipeline on an emergency or crash basis. I say that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) should accelerate this program and do something meaningful at once, instead of making vague statements as to which route would be more preferable, and for what reason.

Speaking of coal, the government recently indicated that it is interested in allocating funds to Cape Breton Development Corporation to pursue more active research and development in order that we can better utilize the coal in eastern Canada. Our coal should be used for domestic heating and for cooking purposes as well after suitable treatment to remove sulphur. Recently, the Cape Breton Development Corporation displayed a remarkable lack of foresight. Being apparently unable to fill an order, it had to buy a large amount of coal, at great expense, in the United States for coking purposes; then, lo and behold, through inexcusable lack of foresight, large quantities of this coal were found to be unacceptable for the purpose intended.

This type of thing characterizes the poor administration of Devco operations. There has been poor administration and poor maintenance regarding the mines; also poor safety precautions, examples of which have previously been brought to the attention of the House. I will not elaborate on it at this time; will merely say that an uninspired record is shown in research and development, and I am glad to see more money allotted in the estimates for this purpose.

With regard to the environment, there is no commitment in the Speech from the Throne to do anything very meaningful to control conditions in parts of the country where environmental controls are necessary. Not too long ago there was a federal department known as the department of forestry. It has been completely absorbed by the Department of the Environment. Although there may be problems connected with provincial jurisdiction, surely the government knows how desirable it is to encourage provinces to use funds, perhaps made available through ARDA, for more active programs of reforestation. The denuding of forest lands in eastern Canada is causing difficulties with flood control and is bringing about other undesirable side effects. It is time the government seriously encouraged action in respect to reforestation, in conjunction with the provinces.

I always hesitate to mention unemployment insurance since so much has been said about it. Recently I wrote another letter to the minister on this topic. It seems that quite a number of people for one reason or another have been getting more benefits than those to which they were entitled and they are asked to repay the excess, and in some cases all of their benefits. When a person receives unemployment benefits to which he is not entitled, it means that an administrative mistake has been made. When a person in poor circumstances receives a considerable sum of money and then is forced to repay it even if his circumstances have not changed, the result is sad.

However, as in so many other areas, this government does not want to take responsibility for mistakes. I con-