

Oral Questions

number of things that we will be able to approach them with.

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GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The National Advisory Board on Science and Technology recommended to the Prime Minister doubling the budgets of the granting science councils.

Also, federal funding of Canadian universities stands to suffer if proposed freezing of transfer payments to provinces proceeds.

Now that the Prime Minister is about to receive an international award for science, is the minister prepared to double the budget of the granting councils and to reconsider his plans to freeze further transfer payments for post-secondary education before the Prime Minister accepts the science award?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, every scientist in this country knows that the granting councils have been treated very well indeed under existing circumstances. Their budgets are going up next year. We have done the matching fund with industry and universities, some \$350 million over the time period. The granting councils were given a \$200 million injection over a time period. They have had a stable financial regime for the first time over the last five years. That is not bad.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

The minister responsible for science appears to deny the precarious situation of scientific research and education in Canada as assessed by the National Consortium of Scientific and Educational Societies.

If the government's five-year matching grants policy is allowed to terminate this year, NSERC's budget for 1991-92 will effectively be cut by \$79 million.

Would the minister commit the government in the House today to renewing the matching grants policy?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, there are really two separate questions there.

One is whether the funds that are in there for the matching grants will remain there. That is a question the Minister of Finance will have to consider next year. I think they will, but that is his problem.

The second question is whether that matching grant policy will be there. Does the hon. member really want this particular matching grant policy to stay in place? I don't because I don't think it is the right one. I want something else.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

As he knows, Nova Scotia Power Corporation plans to proceed with the Point Aconi coal fired electrical power plant. The project will produce acid rain as well as 1.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year and \$500 million in long-term debt.

Since this project has not been properly evaluated for either its environmental impact or the energy alternatives to it, is the minister prepared today to request that these two matters be evaluated before any further contracts or consideration of the project are made?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Point Aconi plant is within the jurisdiction of the province of Nova Scotia. The province has specific environmental considerations within its jurisdiction. As well it has to deal with having constant and increased power needs.

In large measure the member's two-part question should be addressed to those provincial considerations.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians are starting to wonder how we are going to get a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide levels by the year 2005 if these kinds of projects continue to proceed and are described as being solely in provincial jurisdiction.

The Government of Nova Scotia provided funding to the same study that the minister did, "Study on the Reduction of Energy Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions". The study found a variety of measures which (1) reduce carbon dioxide emissions, (2) save energy, and (3) save money, \$150 billion for Canada.