

Oral Questions

The Liberal Premier of Ontario will hold a unique veto power at the First Ministers' Conference, and the aboriginal people of Canada expect Ontario to take a lead in these talks, as indeed the province has in the past.

The Premier of Ontario was well advised to fulfil the provisions of the NDP-Liberal Accord in that province. He is now showing Canadians that, when left to itself, his Government back-peddles. Yesterday it was revealed that 84 per cent of Canadians support the right to aboriginal self-government. I say to Mr. Peterson: "Wake up", and I say to the Leader of the Opposition: "Speak up". Prove to Canadians that you can have a united position on aboriginal rights.

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PENITENTIARIES**ILLITERACY AMONG INMATES—INTRODUCTION OF NEW EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, many of the inmates in Canadian prisons today cannot read or write. They are functionally illiterate. In the past this has meant that they were unable to read, write, and do arithmetic above a grade 5 level. This has now been raised to a grade 8 level, which is more realistic in today's computer age.

The Solicitor General (Mr. Kelleher) recently announced the establishment of a new adult basic education program to increase the functional literacy of federal penitentiary inmates. In my riding of Fraser Valley East, Fraser Valley College has just been granted an extension from Correctional Services to increase the services that it now provides to over 100 inmates in seven federal institutions through its literacy and life skills programs.

This is an important move taken by a Government that recognizes a silent problem and works to solve it. Colleges such as Fraser Valley are committed to helping Canadians achieve a strong sense of self-worth and to make them more productive members of society. I know that the teachers and staff of the Fraser Valley College welcome the stand taken by the Solicitor General in making literacy a number one priority for inmates. I for one cannot imagine a life without books. Can you, Mr. Speaker?

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION**MINISTER'S ATTITUDE**

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) got back from Florida, he said that he failed to understand how refugees who had spent only three or four days in a country

could protest against the laws of that country. He was referring to the Chileans who are on a hunger strike in Montreal. I would like to inform the Minister that these refugees are not protesting against the law. The law has not changed. They are protesting against the repressive measures taken by the Minister on February 20 that closed this country's doors. I can also inform the Minister that these persons are not alone. While he was in Florida, people started to react.

Last Tuesday night in Montreal, 400 people met to protest the action taken by the Minister of Employment and Immigration. There were representatives from various churches, including the archdiocese of Montreal and the Anglican, United, Mennonite and Presbyterian Churches. There was a rabbi and the President of the Canadian Jewish Congress. There were union representatives. The Minister has seen only the beginning of a vast protest movement that will not cease until these repressive measures have been repealed.

● (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

PETRO-CANADA**FUTURE OF CORPORATION**

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. I say to him that I disagree with the views of senior Ministers of his Government about Petro-Canada. I believe firmly that Petro-Canada has a policy role to play in this country and that Canada should never again be held hostage by OPEC. Does the Deputy Prime Minister not believe that Petro-Canada has a vital and crucial role to play in the exploration and development of oil and gas, particularly on the frontier? And does he not believe that that is important and vital to the self-sufficiency of this country in the future?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister dealt with that question quite completely yesterday. He clearly pointed out the fact that Petro-Canada was a candidate which was being examined. I am interested in the comments of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition because we are not really sure what his position is in terms of the rest of his Party. His colleague, in his book *Up the Hill*, complained very bitterly about the fact that Canadians invested billions of dollars in this particular institution and that there were strong suggestions it should be divested.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!