

Oral Questions

St. John's, at least from January to March, to protect the lives of Canadians working on oil rigs on the Grand Banks. The Minister also knows that the Cross report referred to the fact that the Halifax search and rescue region has constantly referred to the fact that it is unable to satisfy search and rescue responsibilities to the limit of its jurisdiction, for example, the Grand Banks.

If anything happens out there, the Minister and his colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, will have to share the responsibility. Will he agree to the request of the Government of Newfoundland, the inter-church committee, and other concerned people, to deploy search and rescue helicopters in St. John's, or Argentia? He knows that last year during an emergency it took 19 hours to get search and rescue helicopters to St. John's.

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have listened quite carefully to the question posed by the Hon. Member to my colleague, the Minister of Energy. I agree with the reply which was given by the Minister of Energy.

I quite understand the concern of the hon. gentleman. I fully recognize that we have the responsibility and, as lead Minister, I have the responsibility to provide for any distress situation.

I have taken great care to inform myself and to receive an evaluation of the present deployment of search and rescue facilities on the East Coast. I have been advised—and I am satisfied—that the facilities presently in place are deployed to the best standards which have been recognized. Indeed, last Fall, as the Hon. Minister of Energy indicated, there was an agreement by the provinces and the industry that the deployment of the facilities for search and rescue, that is, the dedicated facilities, was satisfactory and complemented quite well the secondary search and rescue facilities available on the East Coast.

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EDUCATION

POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS—EFFECT OF INCREASED FEES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State who, I hope, will give a more articulate reply than the one we just heard. Is the Minister aware that the post-secondary education system is fast becoming a preserve of the rich with, for example, in British Columbia tuition fees rising 33 per cent this year, enrollments being sharply curtailed, student financial aid being very sharply restricted, and the provincial Government not even passing on to the universities and colleges what little increase in funds the federal Government has provided?

In view of these trends and the difficulty the federal and provincial Governments are having in re-establishing the Established Programs Financing, will the Minister consider

the enormous urgency of the crisis and urge his colleagues the necessity of establishing a national task force representative not only of both levels of government but of the institutions concerned—the faculty and the students—to address the crisis before the principle of accessibility is totally eroded?

[Translation]

Hon. Serge Joyal (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I must say to the Hon. Member that the Canadian Government has assumed its full responsibility by financing a major share of post-secondary education in Canada. In the previous session, this House did allocate sizeable amounts, increasing student assistance by more than \$60 million. The situation described by the Hon. Member is peculiar to British Columbia.

We have already expressed to the British Columbia Minister our concern that the funds be transferred indeed to the students. As to renewing post-secondary education financing, we are now drafting a series of proposals to the provinces which would ensure us that the funds voted by the Parliament of Canada to support post-secondary education are really used by those for whom they are meant.

[English]

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY FUND TO ASSIST UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. He has said that accessibility is a fundamental right, and that it is a concern of the federal Government that the principle of accessibility shall not be eroded. Yet, every day it is being eroded. It is not enough for him simply to put the blame on the provinces.

In view of the fact that there is not yet an agreement, that the two levels of government seem unable to reach an agreement, and that the students are the ones who are suffering, will the Minister not therefore establish in the meantime an emergency fund expressly for universities and colleges, not for other purposes, before the crisis deepens?

[Translation]

Hon. Serge Joyal (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the situation as described by the Hon. Member is essentially due to the moves and policies of the Government of British Columbia, and those policies were condemned by this side of the House. I did so myself when during the National University Week I was given the opportunity to remind Canadians of the importance of strengthening post-secondary education in Canada.

As for what should be done during the forthcoming months, I am happy to inform the Hon. Member that I have been in touch with the Chairman of the Council of Education Ministers and have informed him of the intention of the Canadian Government to open negotiations with the provincial Governments as soon as possible to make sure that the next genera-