

at the same time is selling off western assets, western jobs and western investment prospects to eastern Canada?

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EDUCATION

INCREASE IN FEDERAL PAYMENTS TO PROVINCES

Mr. Robert Bockstael (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, toward the end of 1981, and again about this time last year, we heard a great deal about how much the federal Government was "cutting back" on its transfers to the provincial Governments for health and post-secondary education. The Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) rejected those charges at the time as totally unfounded, and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said that our transfers for the coming fiscal year would increase more rapidly than the rate of over-all federal expenditures.

There is proof of these statements in the Main Estimates tabled on Tuesday, which show a 20.9 per cent increase in our transfers to the Provinces for these purposes. We are providing them with \$6.32 billion, an increase of \$1.15 billion over current cash outlays. This is \$160 million more than originally anticipated, because we are protecting the Provinces against the decline of tax revenues. So let there be no more talk about how badly the Provinces have been treated in these very difficult times.

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ENERGY

FREEZING OF DOMESTIC OIL PRICE URGED

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, it is becoming increasingly evident that world oil prices will be subjected to severe buffeting and wild fluctuations in the near future. Such price gyrations, mainly in a downward direction, will give rise to accentuated world economic instability, both internationally and domestically, in many countries.

In Canada the formula for establishing domestic oil prices contained in the September, 1981, Canada-Alberta oil agreement is redundant. It is imperative that domestic oil price stability be maintained for the next several years to assist in the economic recovery of the nation. Therefore, Madam Speaker, may I suggest that an agreement be reached immediately to fix or freeze the Canadian domestic oil price at its current level of \$29.75 per barrel for the lifetime of the Ottawa-Alberta agreement which expires in 1986. Such an agreement should be pursued and finalized during the meeting between the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and Premier Lougheed on Monday.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS

QUEBEC BILL 111

Mr. André Maltais (Manicouagan): Madam Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to Bill 111 which was passed in Quebec not long ago. A number of editorial writers and commentators have pointed out this was the first time that human rights and freedoms were legislated away. However, I would like to inform the House that it is actually the second time the Province of Quebec has ignored the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In fact, it has happened before, when Bill 37 amalgamated Baie-Comeau and Hauterive. At the time, the people of Baie-Comeau were prevented from holding meetings, thus limiting their right of assembly. The citizens of Baie-Comeau then asked the Minister of Justice to be particularly vigilant with respect to the rights of Quebecers.

Madam Speaker, I therefore wish to ask the Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan) who is in the House today, to be particularly attentive to the rights of Quebecers, because in this country of ours, all Canadians should be equal before the law and have the same privileges and legal recognition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ADMINISTRATION

CAPE BRETON COAL AGREEMENT—FIRST AWARENESS OF FINANCE MINISTER

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. On February 17 the Prime Minister informed the House that the first time the Minister of Finance became aware of the Scotia Coal Synfuels Project was, and I quote from *Hansard* at page 22933:

—the first knowledge he had to this arrangement was on September 3, 1981.

Yesterday the Prime Minister came into the House and informed us that that information had been misleading and that in fact the Minister of Finance had known of the transaction as early as January, 1981. Would the Prime Minister inform the House if he is standing by that information which he gave us yesterday? Is that the date the Minister first was aware of it?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I heard the Minister answer that question this morning, and my answer is in the affirmative.