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Speech from the Throne, Second Session, Twenty-Ninth Parliament of Canada

Governor-General Jules Léger, reading the Speech from the Throne at the opening of Canada's twenty-ninth Parliament on February 27, outlined measures the Government would introduce to contain inflation; ensure that oil and energy costs do not cause disruptions in the economy; assist regional development; end discrimination in freight rates; develop a new ports policy; and increase Canada's food production. Two new councils – one for social sciences, one for natural sciences, to develop national science objectives – would be established, as would a national urban transportation organization to develop new technology for the improvement of public transportation.

Legislation on other matters to be brought before the Government was also contained in the Speech, excerpts from which follow:

* * * *

A principal responsibility of the Government and one of its main policy objectives is to maintain high levels of income, production and employment. This policy should in itself help to overcome some of the supply problems which are causing prices to rise. But in addition, and more immediately, the Government's policy in dealing with inflation will be to step in, as it has done in the past, and take specific measures to increase the supply of certain goods and services, to protect those who are not able to protect themselves against the effects of inflation, to cushion consumers against sudden and disruptive price increases of essential commodities, and to prevent any group or groups from taking undue advantage of the current situation at the expense of others.

Oil policy

In the case of oil, the Government has been concerned about the individual hardships caused by the rise in prices and about the over-all effect of the increase on the economy. Nonetheless, for Canada to become self-reliant and be protected against abrupt changes in supply, prices must be such as to encourage the exploration and development of non-conventional and frontier oil resources. The Government must ensure that a sufficient part of the funds generated by higher prices will

be used for such exploration and development. It will introduce legislation to create a national petroleum company which will assure greater Canadian presence and participation in these and other activities. It has announced the extension of the pipeline from the Western oil fields to Eastern Canada and the establishment of a single Canadian market which will guarantee an outlet for domestically-produced oil.

In furthering these longer-term objectives, the Government has a duty to manage the economy in the interests of all Canadians, and in particular to moderate the inflationary effects resulting from the oil crisis. It has sought, in co-operation with the provinces, to make sure that the difficult transition to higher oil and energy costs occurs in an orderly way so as to not cause unnecessary disruptions in economic activity, employment and prices. To this end, it must ensure that the price of domestically-produced oil does not increase at an unreasonable rate and that the price of oil be the same in all parts of Canada subject, of course, to transportation costs. Legislation will be introduced to ensure that the responsibilities of the Government in these respects can be effectively discharged.

Discussion with the provinces on the Government's objectives and on the best means of achieving them is con-