

Oral Questions

Mr. de Corneille: The Americans would hardly know; after all it's the Americans who are using it.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER CONDUCT INQUIRY

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, in order to clear this matter up, is the Minister saying that he has washed his hands of the whole matter, or is he telling the House that he will continue to look into the matter? It is a historic Canadian principle enunciated by Prime Minister Pearson in 1965 that we will use our uranium for peaceful purposes. Therefore, will the Minister look into this matter further, and is he prepared to have an inquiry with respect to the use of—

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is three questions.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have explicitly, and now for the third time, asked Members of the House to provide me with any information that they have, and said that I will look into it. So far we have received no evidence at all from CTV, from the NDP, or from anyone else that there has been a violation of treaty.

With regard to commissions, the Hon. Member may well know that there was a Commission of Inquiry appointed by the New Democratic Government of Saskatchewan, the Bayda Commission, which looked into precisely the question that is now being raised, including whether or not there was a danger to proliferation policy. The new Democratic Party commission in Saskatchewan concluded that the treaty provisions that are now in place were adequate. That was the position of Mr. Blakeney in 1978. He has changed his position now, but the facts have not changed.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS

AMOUNT OF TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The Minister's decision to cut off \$2 billion in transfer payments to the provinces will result in much hardship for students, the elderly, the provinces, and indeed the municipalities. Is the Minister of Finance prepared to table in the House today copies of the impact studies that his Department or other Departments of the Government have done with regard to these cut-backs and how they will affect the individual provinces?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I indicated in the Budget last May that we were going to reduce the rate of growth of the federal-provincial transfers by \$2 billion by 1990-1991. That means that instead of going that fast, they are only going to go less fast, and less fast is still pretty fast because there is still going to be a considerable amount of money available to the provinces to be used in the

range of programs that are supported by the federal Government. I presented this proposal to the Finance Ministers against the background of the very serious financial position of the federal Government. One thing that came through loud and clear was that the Finance Ministers themselves understand, probably considerably better than the Member opposite, the serious financial position that we are in and, therefore, the need to take this decision.

POSITION OF PROVINCES

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I remind the Minister of Finance that this measure will substantially reduce the revenues of the provincial Governments, therefore causing extreme havoc for a great number of people. Will the Minister of Finance indicate to the House what remedial measures he will take in his capacity as Minister of Finance to assist those poorer provinces and those poorer municipalities throughout the country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I recognize that it is not easy for any province to see its rate of growth reduced. However, I remind the Hon. Member that the percentage of Government spending in these areas in 1990-91 will be the same as today. The share of the federal Government Budget will be unchanged. By making this announcement today we have given the provinces ample warning and ample opportunity to change the method of delivery of programs by working with the federal Government in order to have the least disruptive transition to this new regime.

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DISARMAMENT

NONPROLIFERATION TREATY NEGOTIATIONS—CANADIAN INITIATIVES

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. With the success of the nonproliferation treaty conference behind us and the Geneva summit in front of us, what initiative can the Government take on its own, or with other countries, to move the super powers at Geneva toward definite, clear-cut actions that will lift higher this window of opportunity, specifically the possibility of a comprehensive test ban?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I share with the Hon. Member, and I am sure with all Members of the House, a great deal of satisfaction with the success that was found by all nations in the nonproliferation treaty negotiations in Geneva, particularly because there was some great concern before that conference that no consensus would be found. I think that demonstrates that when all nations are prepared to work toward some agreement, rather than leaving matters exclusively to the super powers, there is an opportunity for progress to be made. We will be continuing the initiatives that Canada has followed in