

Inquiries of the Ministry

Martin, of the faculty of social sciences of Laval University, made the suggestion that winter navigation in the St. Lawrence might eventually help to bring about a permanent solution of unemployment. I think the suggestion has merit and, therefore, should and will receive careful consideration and study.

STRIKE OF RIVER PILOTS, KINGSTON MARINE DISTRICT

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may ask the Minister of Transport a question. I wonder if he himself or his officials have been giving consideration to means of conciliating the strike between the pilots in the Montreal-Ottawa-Kingston district and the shipping federation of Canada?

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I do not as yet have full information regarding the strike which has taken place in the Kingston marine pilotage district. This district covers the St. Lawrence area from Montreal to Kingston, and is a pilotage district under the supervision of my department, set up in accordance with the provisions of the Canada Shipping Act.

Apparently a large number, if not all, of the pilots are at present on strike. No advance warning of the strike was given to my department, nor were there any advance consultations with my department regarding problems which may have given rise to the strike. First indications received from individual pilots were to the effect that the cause was a heavy load of work, which is normal toward the end of the season; but subsequent information appeared to indicate that the reason was a desire on the part of the pilots to compel the government to introduce what is known as compulsory payment of pilotage dues.

A formal submission from the representative of the pilots had just reached my department at the time the strike took place, and there has not yet been any opportunity to consider its contents in detail, although I understand that the pilots' demands relate to, and indeed go farther than, demands submitted to and rejected by the previous administration over a year ago. They would involve compelling all ships which pass through this area of the river, Canadian and foreign, to pay dues to the pilots regardless of whether or not a pilot is required.

The action of the pilots would appear to be a violation of the officially authorized by-laws of the pilotage district, and the pilots have accordingly been warned that

they have rendered themselves liable to the penalties provided in the by-laws. The official pilots' committee is being requested to come to Ottawa to explain its position forthwith, and immediate consultations are also planned with representatives of the deep sea and great lakes shipping companies whose vessels may be involved.

In so far as the effects of the strike are concerned, it would appear that these would be more serious with regard to deep sea tramp shipping which hoped to leave the great lakes at the end of this season, rather than on deep sea ships which have regular routes or on Canadian and great lakes shipping which is fully familiar with the area.

Mr. Chevrier: Thank you.

EFFECT OF DIRECTIVE TO NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): I should like to address a question to the Minister of Labour. Will the minister report to the house at an early date the effect of his directive to the national employment service in increasing placements of workers seeking jobs?

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, this is an effort on the part of those carrying out the directive the results of which are fairly hard to judge. However, if a survey can be made to ascertain the result of the directive and the efforts that are being made to carry out that directive I will be glad to report to the house, if such a report is available at the time.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

U.S.-CANADA—INQUIRY AS TO JOINT AIR DEFENCE COMMAND

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): As we still see through a glass darkly, I should like to address a question to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the growing disquietude due to the present inscrutable and intangible arrangements with respect to the command of Canadian armed forces by General Partridge, would the minister make a statement to inform the house as to General Partridge's present powers, with respect to the disposition of Canadian forces in Canada and his authority with respect to logistics and other matters requiring decision in the operation of such forces?

Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence): I thank the hon. member for sending me notice of his question a few minutes