

*Inquiries of the Ministry***SHIPPING****REQUEST FOR SAFETY INSPECTION OF STEEL HULLED TOW BOATS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): I have a question for the Minister of Transport regarding the representations of the Canadian Merchant Service Guild about the use of steel hull tow boats, and whether the minister is in a position to reply?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Yes. I think this is only the fourth time the hon. gentleman has asked the question. I have found my bit of paper, and the report I have is that on February 8 last the department received a copy of a preliminary report of an investigating committee of the Canadian Merchant Service Guild into tow boat sinkings on the British Columbia coast.

In the report a recommendation was made that steel hulled tow boats be called in to ensure that they contain three watertight bulkheads placed in such a manner that the flooding of any single compartment would not sink the vessel. The department is also doing a study of the recent tow boat sinkings, and the recommendation from the Canadian Merchant Service Guild will be considered at the time the department's investigation is complete. As soon as it has been completed I will let the hon. gentleman know the results.

HOUSING**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Heward Graftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, the day before yesterday in the house the Minister of Labour confirmed press reports that the cross-country housing symposia and study groups have come to an end. In view of this, and in view of the continuing housing shortage, can the minister inform us whether the government is considering new measures to be announced in order to affect springtime housing starts?

Mr. Speaker: My recollection is that this is a repetition of a question asked two days ago by the hon. member.

Mr. Graftey: Excuse me, Mr. Speaker; I asked the Acting Prime Minister this question

Acting Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the constitutional faux pas on the part of the Minister of Industry who commented publicly on the choice of a successor to the late Governor General, and in particular whether his attention was drawn to these words in the report in the *Montreal Gazette*:

—Prime Minister is giving serious consideration to the possibility of recommending—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The right hon. gentleman should ask the question directly without reference to the newspaper article.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The question is, has his attention been drawn to this serious constitutional breach of a minister commenting on the recommendation to be made by the Prime Minister to the Queen regarding her representative in Canada?

Hon. Paul Martin (Acting Prime Minister): I have read the article, Mr. Speaker, to which my hon. friend directs my attention. I would say that my colleague indicated that this is a matter which under our constitutional practice rests with the Prime Minister. As my hon. friend knows, it is the responsibility of the Prime Minister to advise Her Majesty the Queen of Canada in the matter of the appointment of the Queen's representative in Canada. The advice by the Prime Minister to the Sovereign is and always has been regarded as completely confidential, and it is not for me to speculate in any way on what it might be.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The statement by the Acting Prime Minister that the recommendation is to be strictly confidential is well founded. Then I ask him what justification is there for one of the ministers to make a statement which would indicate that this particular tradition has been subjected to a gross travesty?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the story warrants the conclusion drawn by the right hon. gentleman. The Minister of Industry clearly indicated that under our constitutional usage this was the responsibility of the Prime Minister. In my judgment he in no way violated this principle of constitutional practice.