

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 14, 1971

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

REPORT BY MINISTER ON INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS—
TABLING OF NATO AND OECD COMMUNIQUÉS

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, returning to the House after two weeks of meetings in Lisbon, Paris, Washington and New York I have a number of important matters to report.

On Friday at the United Nations in New York I had a meeting with the Secretary General and Mr. Kittani, Assistant Secretary General for Interagency Affairs who has been co-ordinating the United Nations relief efforts in East Pakistan and West Bengal. This afternoon I will be seeing the Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh. These conversations will enable the government to assess the present needs in East Pakistan and West Bengal and the machinery needed to provide relief. This will help us to provide further assistance in the most effective way.

My colleague the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis) has reported to you on the joint ministerial meeting on Great Lakes pollution in Washington last Thursday, at which I led the Canadian delegation. The Canada-United States Agreement that we will be negotiating in the next few months calls for intergovernmental co-operation on an unprecedented scale, involving as it does the governments of Canada, Ontario and Quebec on our side of the border, of the United States and five Great Lakes states on the other.

I must say that I was impressed in Washington by the way all interested parties accepted their responsibilities for the reversal of the degradation of the Great Lakes, by the shared determination to get on with the job and particularly by the sense of urgency expressed by speaker after speaker.

We are already at work on the problem, on both sides of the border. The agreement, when it comes into effect, will establish specific goals, speed up the work and provide powers to the International Joint Commission to carry out the necessary surveillance to ensure that quality standards are met and maintained.

While in Washington, as I indicated to the House earlier, my colleague the Minister of the Environment and I had a meeting with Secretary Rogers on the proposed movement of oil from Prudhoe Bay to Seattle through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia. I

made clear to Secretary Rogers that my purpose was not, as some have suggested, to promote the so-called "MacKenzie Route", but rather to impress upon the United States government its common interest with Canada in the avoidance of a major pollution threat to what my colleague the Minister of the Environment described as "essentially an inland sea around which are population concentrations and substantial economic interests as well as features of great natural beauty and recreational value".

• (11:10 a.m.)

I impressed upon Secretary Rogers that the movement of oil through these waters offered no economic benefit whatever to Canada, while imposing upon Canada almost all the risks of oil pollution. We cannot prevent it legally. We can expect the United States to share our concern and to join in doing everything possible to avoid catastrophe.

Mr. Rogers undertook to let me know very shortly about arrangements for special joint studies into this environmental problem. In return, I agree with him that such joint studies could include oil pollution problems on the Atlantic seaboard where the movement of tankers to Canadian ports could threaten their environment. I am satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that our views are being made known in a way as to have a bearing on United States consideration of the matter before final decisions are taken.

At the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Lisbon the alliance concentrated on the very real movement toward détente between east and west that was foreseen at the December meeting in Brussels. This return upon many years' careful planning, and probing of Soviet intentions, is bringing a new sense of direction to the alliance, away from confrontation and toward negotiation. As in Washington later, I had the sense of participation in an historic event.

Progress in the four-power talks on Berlin enabled ministers to express their hope that before their next meeting in December those negotiations might have reached a stage where multilateral conversations leading toward a security conference could begin. This confirms the importance the alliance attaches to a satisfactory outcome of the Berlin talks, to create the necessary climate for the resolution of wider European problems.

The principal issue at the meeting was the alliance's proposal for mutual balanced force reductions. After some years of silence, recently there have been strong indications of Soviet interest. Mr. Brezhnev's speech in Tiflis in May, the conversations the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) had with Soviet leaders in Moscow and Mr.