

Inquiries of the Ministry

identified the other day in the House of Commons is the plant of the co-operative producing soda and chlorine near Saskatoon. The necessary steps have been taken to make sure the effluent stream containing mercury is kept within the plant itself. Mercury is meanwhile being removed by treating the effluent.

Mr. Simpson: Mr. Speaker, does this mean that the pollution of the Saskatchewan River by this mercury effluent has been discontinued?

Mr. Davis: The pollution from that plant has certainly ceased, and we think it is the principal, if not the only, source of mercury pollution. However, it will take a spring freshet to flush out the river completely.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Fisheries whether any of the compensation he announced earlier will be paid to those people who caught fish that were contaminated or will the federal government contributions be made to a general pool for distribution?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, there is no question of compensation to fishermen in this case because all the fish they have been able to catch has been bought from them at the going market price. The fishermen have not suffered in any way. There is still the question of recovering the amounts paid to the fishermen by the federal government because we have had to destroy all the fish in question.

Mr. Simpson: Mr. Speaker, could the minister indicate at this time how long the purchase of contaminated fish by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board will continue?

Mr. Davis: I cannot be certain. However, it will continue as long as the level of contamination observed in the fish comes anywhere near the United Nations standards with regard to mercury.

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, in view of the poisonous effect of mercury has the minister taken any steps to make certain that no fish caught in this area are bootlegged to another lake which may be clear of mercury so that they can then be sold?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, this is the main reason we have continued to pay what would have been the market price and, indeed, have followed the upward trend in prices normal at this season of the year. There has been no price incentive whatsoever for fishermen to

sell to anyone else and under the freshwater fish legislation there is no legal buyer other than the Freshwater Fish Corporation.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I will recognize the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands on a further supplementary but I must remind hon. members that we are running out of time.

DUMPING OF MINE TAILINGS IN QUATSINO SOUND

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister a question about the application of the Utah Mining Company to dump into Quatsino Sound some 9.3 million gallons a day of tailings which have a quantity of cyanide residue. What action is the minister's department taking to prevent this dumping which could be very detrimental to the fishing industry of Vancouver Island?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): We have been keeping this situation on the west coast under very close review. My department does not issue permits to pollute or dump any effluent in the fisheries waters of Canada. Its powers are well known in respect of imposing fines. So individual mining companies like Utah Mining Company have kept in close touch with the department and have cleared their processes and practices with the department. We believe they will be following the right procedures.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct this question to the Government House Leader. Has there been any departure in the order of business set out for the House by the House Leader last Thursday? I am particularly interested in the second reading of Bill C-175 respecting the Canadian Saltfish Corporation since there are a number of people in the five provinces concerned who are quite anxious to be here for that debate.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): It is difficult to predict the order of business without some firm agreement as to the time each particular measure will take. I expect there might be some agreement to conclude the debate on the Canada water bill in the early afternoon tomorrow.