

Inquiries of the Ministry

Kootenay West redirected my attention to a question he had asked me on May 22 as recorded at page 340 of *Hansard*, which I took as notice. I apologize to the hon. gentleman for having been so long in giving him a reply. The hon. gentleman's question was as follows:

In view of the fact that the government of British Columbia is giving consideration to the assessment of yacht club wharves and boat houses for taxation or exemption, and in view of the fact that such publicly-owned marine facilities might properly be considered as aids to navigation, would the minister inform the house whether under these circumstances such aids to navigation come within the jurisdiction of the federal government?

My understanding is that the hon. gentleman's question arose in connection with wharves, etc., on the lakes in the Kootenay area. Perhaps I should just say a word as to the position which has always been taken and which I also take as to the propriety of the Minister of Justice giving what are, after all, legal opinions on public matters in this house. As adviser to the government it is not proper for the minister to give legal opinions on public matters to the House of Commons; his task is confined to that of advising the government.

Therefore I can only answer the question in a very general way by saying that the jurisdiction of the federal government in waters such as these is confined, as I understand it, exclusively to matters of navigation. The question of the right to tax could only be determined if and when any legislation or other action to impose taxes is actually passed or taken.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**REPORTED U.K. USE OF U.S. ATOMIC WEAPONS**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs in the absence of the Minister of National Defence, to whom perhaps it should be addressed, arising out of a report from Washington to the effect that arrangements have been made between the United States and United Kingdom governments by which United Kingdom forces may now use atomic weapons made in the United States. Are there any such arrangements covering Canadian forces?

Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I will take that as notice, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Fulton.]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**DOUKHOBORS—NEGOTIATIONS WITH BRITISH COLUMBIA**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Erhart Regier (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Justice, who I understand has been out in British Columbia lately. Would the minister care to make a report on any negotiations or discussions he had with officials of the government of British Columbia on the so-called problem of the Doukhobors, and also comment as to whether or not the remedy proposed by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni in this house yesterday is the government's way of finding a solution? I am referring to the abandonment of the Kettle Valley railway and the abolition of the lumber industry in the Kootenays.

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I met with the premier of British Columbia, the attorney general, the provincial secretary and officials of the British Columbia government in Victoria on Monday, together with the deputy minister of justice and the commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We received a statement of the position of the British Columbia government and a proposal from that government. I returned here yesterday, and it was the agreement arrived at in Victoria that I would report to my colleagues and communicate our decision and reaction to the statement of the British Columbia government position, to the premier of the province. It was agreed that until that is done and there is a chance to discuss the matter further, no public statement will be made as to the details of the negotiations.

As to the solutions suggested by any other persons, whether they be members of this house or not, I, of course would not be in a position to comment while the matter is under negotiation. But I can tell the hon. gentleman that the solution to which he referred, at least as it was put forward, does not represent the attitude of the government.

HARBOURS**ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE ON DEVELOPMENT**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): I wonder whether the Minister of Public Works is in a position to table the correspondence I asked for yesterday.