

member probably knows. I am not aware that the British and the Norwegian governments have made public protests as yet, but perhaps they may be driven to it—as we may be as well.

POLLUTION

AVAILABILITY TO COMMITTEE OF OPINIONS EXPRESSED AT FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have a question for the Prime Minister arising from the discussion on pollution which took place at the federal-provincial conference. Would the Prime Minister advise the House in what manner the government intends to place before the parliamentary committee the various opinions which were expressed at the conference so that the committee might be up to date?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Perhaps I should deal with that inquiry. There is a motion on the Order Paper in the name of my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The conference having been held, it might be appropriate to arrange, after discussion with the opposition House leaders, that the question be put some time next week or shortly after so that action could be taken.

Mr. Aiken: I was referring particularly to the discussions on pollution and the Canada Water bill. The President of the Privy Council did not refer to this aspect. We are vitally concerned because the committee is considering this very bill, which was the subject of discussion at the conference.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): As far as the government is concerned, the minister pledged to meet with the premiers who wanted to have further discussions on this subject, either personally or through his officials, and to consider further proposals for changes or amendments which had been made. He will consider which would be the best way of bringing such amendments before the committee, or before the House, if necessary. As far as the provincial positions are concerned—I have no authority over the committee, of course—the committee might wish to seize itself, if it thinks fit, of copies of the provincial briefs, which have been made public.

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Inquiries of the Ministry

TRANSPORT

MARITIMES—EFFECT ON SAFETY OF REDUCTION OF RAILWAY MAINTENANCE-OF-WAY EMPLOYEES

Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Central Nova): May I direct this question to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Speaker? He may wish to take it as notice. Has the hon. gentleman received communications from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, division 586, and the United Transportation Union, Local 500, asking that he investigate the effect on the safety factor which could result from cutting the number of maintenance-of-way employees in the maritime area by 50 per cent? If so, will he look into this serious situation?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): I do not recall having received these communications, but I will look into it and reply later.

DEPARTMENTAL REORGANIZATION—ASSURANCE RESPECTING STAFF LAY-OFFS

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): I have a question for the Minister of Transport relating to his staff and his reorganization plans. Will he give an assurance to the House that, as a result of these changes to be made in the department, there will be no staff reductions, or, at least that he will not take the opportunity to bring about serious lay-offs among the staff of the National Harbours Board, Air Canada and the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority? Will he give this definite assurance here and now in view of the apprehension—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has asked his question.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): I think it is anticipated that there will be some personnel changes of a minor nature but I believe I can provide the assurance for which the hon. member is looking.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Can the minister allay the fears of certain employees, such as the employees on the seaway, who believe they will become civil servants and lose some of their collective bargaining rights together with some of their present status as employees of a Crown corporation as a result of the contemplated reorganization?

Mr. Jamieson: I indicated yesterday that the status of the seaway will remain virtually