

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we are considering this. When a date has been agreed upon for the conference proper we will then raise the question of publication, somewhat in advance if possible.

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): A supplementary question to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. In view of the postponement of the constitutional conference, does the government intend to delay the official languages bill until after the same has been discussed at the constitutional conference?

Mr. Trudeau: That is another complex question, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to be in a position to play Santa Claus and bring this bill in before Christmas, but some provinces did ask that the bill not be adopted before the constitutional conference. The new arrangement as to date would mean postponing it by at least a month.

I think what might be acceptable to parliament and to the provinces would be to consider introducing the bill and passing it through some of its stages in this house, though perhaps not adopting it officially on third reading until the constitutional conference has been held. I will explore this possibility.

POLLUTION**INQUIRY AS TO INITIATION OF CONTROL LEGISLATION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Acting Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources during the minister's illness. In view of further emphasis on the need to make an organized beginning in the control of pollution, what progress has been made by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and, as far as the minister knows, the department of health and welfare in getting pollution control legislation initiated?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, we are looking forward to the introduction of the Canada waters act. Last week I spent two days in Victoria meeting with the provincial ministers and our respective officials responsible for water. We made some progress at that time in the discussion of approaches. More specifically, the multi-jurisdictional approach to pollution problems is getting more and more accepted by the provinces. The regional approach is also becoming more and more

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

accepted. I told the ministers that when we introduce the water act we would bring them together for a full debate on that particular bill.

Mr. Lewis: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If I may just briefly introduce my question, last May, I think it was, a suggestion was made to the house when the minister was minister of energy, mines and resources, to the effect that an advisory council on water and air pollution would be established. May I ask whether any progress has been made in this direction.

Mr. Pepin: No, Mr. Speaker. This is still one of the subjects that we are discussing with the provinces. My hon. friend is quite aware that not all provinces agree with us or among themselves on these subjects. I agree it is a slow process, but we have been working for a number of months toward building a consensus on these matters, and I think we have made some progress. By the time we bring in the water act we will be much closer, I think, to a consensus on these questions than would have been the case had we introduced the act last year.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I have another question arising out of the minister's answer. Would he be good enough to inform the house whether these discussions are being carried on intermittently between ministers, or is there a permanent committee of officials representing federal and provincial governments that is entering into a discussion of all these areas?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, discussions have obviously been going on among ministers on these subjects. The federal interdepartmental committees have also been at work here. The co-ordination between federal and provincial governments in this matter is generally undertaken through the council of resource ministers.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Since those negotiations have been going on for quite some time, does the minister feel that he will be in a position to introduce in the house in 1969 legislation on water pollution, because we feel that the matter is urgent.

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, this measure is advocated in the speech from the throne.