

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister could refresh his memory. Can he tell the house whether the federal government received a report from the Bedford Institution of Oceanography wherein he was informed that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is referring to correspondence which took place some time ago. If he wants to refer to correspondence, I believe the way to do it is by a motion for the production of papers.

Mr. Carter: Let me refresh the minister's memory. Is he aware of a statement made in Newfoundland last Wednesday by the premier of that province in which he said that the federal government was responsible for the pollution? I am wondering whether the Department of Fisheries and the federal government have now accepted responsibility, and what steps they are taking to compensate the fishermen who have been affected by this pollution problem?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, it has been established that the company producing phosphorous is responsible for the pollution. The federal government is compensating the fishermen in the area at the present time for their loss of income.

[Later:]

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, in relation to my supplementary question I should like to ask the minister whether he is aware of the answer given in the house last Friday by his parliamentary secretary? In view of this pollution and the fact that the compensation to the fishermen is inadequate in the opinion of the fishermen, and in view of the fact that the minister's parliamentary secretary accepted full responsibility regarding this matter, will the minister say whether the government is now prepared to compensate justly the fishermen of Newfoundland?

POLLUTION BY D.D.T. OF INLAND FISHERY

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is perhaps a related one. About a week and a half ago I directed a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources regarding the possibility of government tests in respect of inland waters and the effect of d.d.t. poisoning on fish. The minister said that this matter was perhaps the responsibility of the Minister of Fisheries. I should like now to direct this

[Mr. Davis.]

question to the Minister of Fisheries. Is he in a position to make a statement now in this regard?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Mr. Speaker, an investigation is going on at this time. Perhaps I will be able to make a statement later.

CANADIAN CONFEDERATION

CONSTITUTIONAL LEGALITY OF PROPOSAL BY QUEBEC TO HOLD REFERENDUM

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, earlier this afternoon the Prime Minister was asked a question regarding a referendum in the province of Quebec on the subject of separation. His answer was somewhat uncertain. I do not say that critically, but I should like to ask him whether it is not a fact that there is no right on the part of the federal government to say to any province that it may not proceed to conduct a referendum, as long as it does not go beyond that in endeavouring to carry the results of the referendum into effect?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): That is a good question, Mr. Speaker. As I answered the previous question, it is this type of problem we are now studying. This involves a constitutional matter and is one in respect of which I cannot come up with an offhand answer.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

NATO—REDUCTION OF FORCES BY OTHER COUNTRIES FOLLOWING CANADIAN ACTION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence whether Canada has made representations to the governments of other NATO countries asking them to follow Canada's intention and begin to reduce their own forces in NATO?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, is it the intention of the government to make such representations to the governments of the NATO countries?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): No, Mr. Speaker, except through the disarmament conference.