

Mr. Trudeau: I reported that the position of the premiers at that time was that we should continue within the restricted forum that we had created for the purpose of the meeting on June 9. I believe that is the position, an honourable one, which was supported by the Leader of the Opposition.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

REPRESENTATION BY YUKON AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COUNCILS AT MEETINGS OF FIRST MINISTERS

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, at the Liberal party convention in Winnipeg a resolution was passed by the delegates saying "the delegates require that the Yukon Council and the Northwest Territories Council be represented at meetings of first ministers so that the people of the north will be directly represented by their locally elected members."

In view of the position of the government, namely, that the elected officials of these two territories are not to be represented by actually sitting down with the first ministers, is the Prime Minister now rejecting the resolution passed by his own delegates in Winnipeg?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Madam Speaker. The hon. member will realize that I was referring only to the meeting of June 9 encompassing the meetings taking place this summer. I indicated at the time, and I repeat, that we have in the past and will in the future continue to include in our delegations representatives from the territories and representatives from other groups.

Under the present framework of federal-provincial meetings, the premiers, I think quite properly, indicated that it would not be quite right for the federal government to bring a lot of other representatives with a voice and a vote of their own into meetings which until now have been comprised of the 11 first ministers.

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FISHERIES

FLOW OF WATERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—EFFECT ON SALMON STOCKS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I am sure the minister knows he ordered, in late June, that the Aluminum Company of Canada increase the flow in the Nechako River to 1,000 cubic feet per second. The Aluminum Company of Canada has now publicly stated its intention to only increase the flow to 850 cubic feet per second. I have taken the time to contact the officials in British Columbia, and the flow today is only 800 cubic feet per second.

I wonder whether the president of Alcan is the minister of fisheries, or whether the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who is seated here in the House today is. Perhaps he could advise the House today—everyone here—whether or not it is still his

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opinion today that the flow in the Nechako River, for the protection of salmon stock, is 1,000 cubic feet per second.

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, the figure of 1,000 c.f.s. is one which was given many years ago. There is a debate on whether or not a figure somewhat below 1,000 would be adequate.

An hon. Member: There was no salmon in those days.

Mr. LeBlanc: We have been measuring and monitoring that very closely. We have made it clear to the Aluminum Company of Canada that if in our judgment, because we have to protect the fish that are moving in and out of that area, the flow was inadequate, then obviously we would go to court if necessary to make sure that the resource is protected.

● (1500)

I have not had a report on this issue since last Friday. I hope to have one when I get back to my office this afternoon. It is not our intention to allow an operation of this type to wipe out the very important run of the fishery.

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, I assume the minister is telling us it is his opinion that 1,000 cubic feet per second is required, because less than a month ago he ordered that and the Aluminum Company of Canada has come out and said that it does not intend to comply with what the minister said.

We have seen the frontier attitude of the minister in western Canada with reference to Riley Creek and other incidents. Will the minister confirm whether the opinion he held two weeks ago, of 1,000 cubic feet per second, is still held by him today, and whether he intends to use section 20(10) of the Fisheries Act to protect the fishery in British Columbia?

Mr. LeBlanc: The hon. member seems to be totally tied to the figure of 1,000, which was a ballpark figure.

Mr. Fulton: It was your figure.

Mr. LeBlanc: If the hon. member will be patient, I will try to explain. The fact is that 1,000 was considered to be desirable. There are, however, conditions of temperature, that is, how warm the season is or is not, what natural flow comes from areas besides the dam where the overspill occurs. This is being monitored.

I have not had a request from my department to take further action at this time. Following the hon. member's question this afternoon, I will obviously be checking with them. If, in the opinion of the scientists in my department—not my opinion—it is necessary to request more water, then we will do that.