

Canadian National Steamships

the Canadian ocean-going fleet should at no time be less than 750,000 deadweight tons and since the sale which was announced this morning reduces it to less than one-third of that figure, what does the government propose to do about restoring the fleet to the size recommended by the Canadian maritime commission?

Mr. Hees: As the hon. member knows very well, all possible considerations were taken into account in trying to keep this fleet intact and operating under Canadian registry. Unfortunately it was found impossible to do so, and it was therefore found necessary to dispose of the fleet.

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): In view of the fact that the minister said consideration has been given to every aspect of this problem, I wonder whether, before arriving at this decision, he consulted with the Secretary of State for External Affairs with regard to the proposal that is being made for a ship to be provided by Canada to the West Indies federation for interisland service under a principle analogous to the Colombo plan, which is being considered by the Department of External Affairs; or was the minister not aware of this consideration that was being given by the other department?

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member was not in the house when those questions were asked on, I think, at least two former occasions.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I was.

Mr. Hees: And on both occasions I replied that this matter had been taken up with the West Indies federation. The ships belonging to the Canadian National (West Indies) Steamships were not suitable for their purpose.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Has the minister seen the evidence of the recent meeting of the external affairs committee where it was suggested that possibly that was not the case?

Mr. Hees: I have not read that evidence, no.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker, may I be allowed another question on this subject and if the minister has not the information at hand perhaps he can give it to the house at a later date. I was wondering how many officers and men on these eight ships will be affected by the sale, and how many of them have found employment in the Department of Transport, as he suggested?

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I have not the exact figures here; I do not think the hon. member

[Mr. Chevrier.]

would expect me to have them. As I outlined to him, everyone who did not wish to retire or take employment elsewhere is now in the employment of the Department of Transport. If he wants the exact numbers, and they are of some significance to him, I shall be glad to give them to him privately.

Mr. Chevrier: I did indicate to the minister—perhaps he did not hear me—that this information may not be available to him at the present time, but I would like to get the exact number.

Mr. Hees: I shall be glad to get that information for the hon. member.

ROYAL VISIT

PRINCESS MARGARET—MESSAGE ON DEPARTURE FROM CANADA

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, hon. members will be interested in the following message which I received this morning from Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret. It reads as follows:

Thank you so much for very kind message on my departure from Canada. I am filled with sadness at having to leave after the most exciting and enjoyable month visit to your great country. I was deeply moved by the wonderful reception I was given everywhere I went and by the unflinching kindness of everyone I met during my tour. Please pass on my most sincere thanks to all who contributed in any way towards the successful organization of my visit. I am delighted and proud, Mr. Prime Minister, that the principal mountain range on Axel Heiberg isle is to bear my name. I am delighted with this and it sets the seal on a visit which I shall never forget for its happiness and interest.

Margaret

With regard to the naming of the mountain range, I may say that the geological survey of Canada, which is now working on a survey of the far north, advised that a name was needed for the principal range of mountains which form the backbone of Axel Heiberg island, the large island immediately west of Ellesmere island. This mountain range is the principal feature of the Queen Elizabeth islands and forms the larger part of that island. It was with pleasure that my colleagues and I decided that the visit of Her Royal Highness could best be commemorated permanently by naming that mountain range the Princess Margaret range.

I think I can add, with the approval of members in all parts of the house, that the visit of Her Royal Highness endeared her everywhere, and that the broadcast last night over television and radio was deeply appreciated by Canadians and touched a chord in their hearts in their regard for the royal family.