

Inquiries of the Ministry

given an indication that the strike is illegal. It seems to me it would follow that if it is an illegal strike he should be suggesting not so much that there is going to be a general investigation into pilotage but what particular steps he intends to take to make sure that the river is opened again to traffic.

I never anticipated that I would be sympathetic to the shipping federation of Canada in a situation, but it does seem to me that in this particular case the pilots gave inadequate indication both as to their grievances and as to the time involved. I certainly have a great deal of sympathy with the Department of Transport in its general pilotage problem as reflected by the situation in this part of the river.

The minister probably knows that there are at least four different systems of pilotage on the great lakes and the St. Lawrence seaway, and one of the idiosyncrasies is that the particular group on strike at the present time seems to be a traditional or almost a family group. I can only say that their approach, in either union terms or terms of their work, is unique and unlike the pattern of the rest of the system. If the minister is indicating he is going to hold an inquiry that is to be all-embracing, to investigate pilotage on the whole system, I think we on the upper lakes would be interested, as would everyone else. I believe there is a certain anachronism in the step-up that exists on the river system. I hope this could be cleared up before we are left with a very bad situation to start the shipping season.

It seems to me that responsibility for that solution finally must devolve upon the minister. I suggest to him that in this particular area he get the people from the Canada labour relations board to work immediately, even in an unofficial way, in order to get some kind of settlement going rather than continue with this indefinite basis under which we have an illegal strike indicated, and at the same time a rather pious hope by the minister that the strikers and the companies will get together.

(Translation):

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the dispute mentioned a moment ago, does the minister intend to afford any protection to the riparian localities from the hazard of ships carrying flammable and explosive material?

[Mr. Fisher.]

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transport continues to assume responsibility for shipping in the St. Lawrence river. We intend to maintain all navigational aids and to enforce all regulations presently in force in that section of Canada's navigable waters.

[Later:]

DAMAGE TO TELEPHONE CABLE

Mr. Gabriel Roberge (Megantic): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Transport a supplementary question. Have the officials of the Department of Transport carried out an investigation in the breakage of a telephone cable by the steamship *Consuelo*, near Quebec city, and can the minister report to the house on that matter?

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): No, Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to report. I could not say at this time whether it will be officials of my department who will investigate the breakage of that cable.

(Text):

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

INQUIRY AS TO LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
BEFORE EASTER RECESS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he would follow the course normally followed at this time of the session by him and his predecessors, and inform the house as to the date of the beginning of the Easter recess and the measures which the government hopes to have passed before that recess, as well as the order of priority attached to those measures.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): I will give consideration to that question, Mr. Speaker. I will look over the order paper and endeavour to give a general outline of some of the matters that would be brought before the house.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): May I ask the Prime Minister a supplementary question. It is a great convenience to western members to know the date of the Easter recess. When the Prime Minister is giving the other information, will he tell us when the Easter recess will commence?

Mr. Diefenbaker: I think the Easter recess generally commences some days in advance of Good Friday.