

has not yet started. In line with the request made by the Leader of the Opposition, on completion of the review I will undertake to make a report to parliament.

DOMINION-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

DISCUSSIONS WITH PROVINCES RESPECTING OFFSHORE MINERAL RIGHTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): May I direct a question to the Prime Minister. Now that the legal decision has been handed down by the Supreme Court regarding offshore mineral rights, is the government prepared to begin negotiations with the provinces that will provide the political agreement necessary for the orderly development of these resources?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government will be considering at once the decision by the Supreme Court and all its implications. An undertaking has been given by the federal government that discussions could take place with the provinces after the legal situation had been cleared up. The legal situation is now clear.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): May I ask a supplementary question of the Prime Minister. In view of the Prime Minister's statement, and in view of the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, will the government consider asking the same court for an opinion with regard to the other provinces, since this decision affects British Columbia alone?

Mr. Pearson: I should like to look into that question to see how far the present decision covers all interests.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Does the right hon. gentleman not think he might discuss this question usefully in Toronto when that conference is taking place at the end of this year?

Mr. Pearson: I do not believe a provincial conference would be a very good place for me to discuss this subject.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): My supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the decision arrived at today by the Supreme Court, does the Prime Minister intend now to bring into the house at the next session a resolution by which

parliament will give authority to the government to ratify this convention which gives us control of the bottom of the sea?

Mr. Pearson: I will have to look into that question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hamilton: I wonder if I might ask a supplementary question following the same line but on another matter. In view of the importance of the resources at the bottom of the sea, when the Prime Minister is looking into this question of the ratification of the convention would he take into account the calling of an international conference to get some sort of rule of law among the nations for the development of the bottom of the sea? It was Canada's proposal in 1958 that got us this far.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. D. W. Groos (Victoria (B.C.)): As a result of this Supreme Court decision will the federal government now give consideration to the possibility of exploring and developing these offshore assets, either alone or in conjunction with private enterprise, so that all Canadians can share in these assets which now belong to all the people?

Mr. Pearson: I said we would begin at once to study this decision in all its implications, including those mentioned by my hon. friend.

Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Pictou): My question to the Prime Minister is this. Will the Prime Minister undertake that in negotiations or conferences with the provinces the federal government will not use this decision as a club to hold over the heads of the provinces?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. D. V. Pugh (Okanagan Boundary): Will the Prime Minister assure the house that the present offshore explorations in British Columbia will not be adversely affected by the Supreme Court decision?

Mr. Pearson: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, they will be encouraged by that decision.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NATO—APPOINTMENT OF ALLEGED FORMER NAZI AS COMMANDER OF CENTRAL SECTOR

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): I wish to direct a question to that genial target