

Inquiries of the Ministry

has given consideration to having a parliamentary committee look into the operations of the post office under the present leadership.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): No. The estimates of the Postmaster General's department will be before the house in a few days, and there will be ample opportunity to discuss its administration then.

INDUSTRY**HEAVY WATER PLANT—CONSIDERATION OF REPORTED NEW METHOD OF PRODUCTION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Is the government reconsidering the question of heavy water manufacture in view of the offer made by British American Oil?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the proposal of a certain company to the government indicating a new and cheaper method of manufacturing heavy water is now being considered by experts of the government, and a report will be made when that consideration is completed.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry. In view of the reply given by the right hon. Prime Minister to the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka regarding heavy water, may I ask the Prime Minister if this would have any effect on the recently announced decision that a heavy water plant would be located in Nova Scotia?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I do not think an announcement was made to the effect that a heavy water plant would be located in Nova Scotia. The announcement made by the government was of a decision to approve negotiation of a contract with an efficient producer. If in the circumstances it turns out that the technological process envisaged by the present anticipated producer has in fact been superseded by a new and substantially more economical process, the government will have to give consideration to the new process.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Did not the minister say the other day that the government had approved the giving of the contract to Deuterium Corporation of Canada; and would he not agree that if all other factors are equal—and I understood him the other day to say that they were—it ought to go to a low employment area such as Cape Breton island?

Mr. Drury: It is correct, Mr. Speaker, that I did announce the awarding of a contract which would result in this heavy water being produced in a low employment area. I would further agree that if all other factors are equal, the contract should go to a low employment area. I am sure, however, that the hon. member would not wish the government to embark upon the production of heavy water—which has a great potential future for Canada—by means of a process known to be obsolete. Unfortunately at the time the decision was made and the announcement was made knowledge of this new process, knowledge of this new breakthrough, if it turns out to be a fact, was not available.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, is the minister suggesting that the basis upon which he made the announcement the other day was a process which became obsolete in one week?

Mr. Drury: It is possible that the process—I say it is possible—on which last week's announcement was made is in fact obsolete and was made obsolete by the technological discoveries in the course of one week.

Hon. George C. Nowlan (Digby-Annapolis-Kings): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that this matter cannot be discussed on the orders of the day, I wonder whether the Secretary of State, as house leader, will undertake to have the remaining estimates of the Department of Industry brought before the committee of supply at the first available opportunity so that we can then discuss it much better and more intelligently than we can now.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Secretary of State): I will be delighted to do that, Mr. Speaker, and the earlier the availability, the better.

Mr. Nowlan: Tomorrow?

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Labour. I wonder whether the Minister of Labour would take this opportunity to enlarge upon the statement of the Minister of Industry, in respect of the remarks he made at Sydney last week.

An hon. Member: They are obsolete.

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): No, Mr. Speaker.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Lawrence E. Kindt (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I should like to revert to the question of the Deuterium Corporation of Canada and ask the Minister of Industry whether that corporation were permitted by his department and the government to revise their bid after all bids were in and before awarding the contract.