

Inquiries of the Ministry

the house before we recess for Christmas. It might even be possible to have a joint meeting of the external affairs and national defence committees, to which reference has been made, and to which he could make a more extensive report.

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): I have a supplementary question for the right hon. Prime Minister. Is it the position of the government of Canada, and will it be reflected in the discussions with regard to the composition of the NATO forces in Europe, that decisions with regard to the continuation or the withdrawal of any components of the force will be taken unilaterally?

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker. The decisions we take as a member of the coalition should be discussed and if possible agreed to by the other members of the coalition, as we would expect other members of the alliance to do.

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON CHRISTMAS RECESS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Prime Minister. Has he set the date of the Christmas recess and that of the resumption of the session after the holiday season? Could he inform the house of those dates?

[English]

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I know hon. members would like to know as soon as possible what the plans are so they can make their travel arrangements. Perhaps my hon. friend will permit me to delay my answer until tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock.

POLLUTION**TAX INCENTIVES TO PLANTS INSTALLING CORRECTIVE DEVICES**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. K. Andras (Port Arthur): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Is it the intention of the government to extend beyond the present effective expiry date of January 1, 1968 the income tax regulation permitting industry an accelerated depreciation rate on equipment installed to prevent, reduce or eliminate water pollution? If so,

[Mr. Pearson.]

will the government consider similar encouragement to industry to take action regarding air and soil pollution?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this question has been asked previously by the hon. member for Essex South and by other hon. members, I believe. The government is giving consideration to the extension of the regulations affecting water pollution after January 1, 1968. I hope I will be able to make a definite announcement before the consideration of the budget is concluded.

With regard to the second part of the question, I have received many representations with regard to similar treatment in connection with air and soil pollution. The matter is under consideration, but I should say that it is of a different character. The regulations permitting an accelerated depreciation on water pollution devices and systems are in the law now and we have to make a decision about their extension. With regard to expenditures on air and soil pollution control, this is a new matter which requires very careful consideration before new action is taken.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that, as the minister said, the government has to make a decision now on whether to extend this concession to industry, will he not say whether the government intends to make it on a permanent basis rather than on the ad hoc basis which is the case at present?

Mr. Sharp: One of the reasons I hesitate to make more than just an announcement is that the point raised by the hon. member is being given consideration. I will make a definite announcement on it before the budget debate is over. The purpose of putting in a date was to induce industry to take action as quickly as possible. If you make this a permanent feature it changes the nature of the incentive. Therefore I agree with the hon. member that we have to decide one way or the other, whether it is for an interim period or indefinitely.

Hon. R. A. Bell (Carleton): May I ask a supplementary question. Is the Minister of Finance saying that during the course of the budget debate there will be new budgetary arrangements made and announced to the house which have not yet been indicated?

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of regulation.