

Inquiries of the Ministry

province of Quebec with a more definitive statement as to what our proposals might be, and I look forward to receiving their co-operation. I hope that will be the case.

ELLIOT LAKE, ONT.—REPORTED RADIOACTIVE POLLUTION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister if he is yet prepared to make a statement regarding the pollution of certain lakes by the waste from uranium processing. Since this matter was first raised in the house there have been press reports indicating that other lakes have also been contaminated. Is the Prime Minister ready to make a statement?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have been as active as possible over the week end trying to get all the information available both on the provincial level where the primary responsibility and jurisdiction lie, and on the federal level, and I hope to be able to make a full statement in respect of the particular matter at Elliot Lake and vicinity and also in more general application either tomorrow or the next day.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): In that connection will the Prime Minister say whether any reports were received by the government regarding the waters in the Elliot Lake area from the atomic energy control board at any time in the last three months, pointing out that there was danger as a result of the pollution of these waters?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I will be dealing with this matter in detail in my statement, and I hope to make that statement tomorrow.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Is the Prime Minister not in a position to say whether he had any reports from the atomic energy control board? Surely that is a matter upon which he should be able to give an immediate answer. If he had reports, it is strange that nothing was done.

Mr. Pearson: I am in a position to say that I have not received any reports, but I wish to go into the matter in further detail.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

RETENTION OF MILITIA UNITS RECOMMENDED FOR DISBANDMENT

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question I

should like to ask the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys. Will the minister tell me what steps are necessary to have a unit of the militia retained on the order of battle in spite of the fact the Suttie commission recommended that it be transferred to a supplementary order? I notice that the minister has had success in having the 40th medium artillery regiment, R.C.A., retained on the order of battle under the recommendation of the Department of National Defence. I should like to have the same information as to his method so I can relate it to the Toronto members on behalf of the Irish regiment and the Vancouver members on behalf of the Irish Fusiliers?

Hon. W. M. Benidickson (Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys): Mr. Speaker, the former minister of defence has made a speech, but I will make inquiries and suggest that his answer will be forthcoming in due course.

Mr. Nielsen: In whose riding is it located?

Mr. Churchill: I did not make a speech, Mr. Speaker; I asked a question. The artillery unit is located in Kenora.

May I ask the Minister of National Defence what he meant on Thursday when I asked him a question, as recorded at page 9994 of *Hansard*, as to why the department failed to accept the recommendations of the Suttie commission, which reported favourably with regard to the maintenance on the active list of some of these regiments. The minister's answer to this question, as recorded on that same page, was as follows:

—the reason that some of the recommendations were not upheld was very carefully explained in the committee on defence—

May I ask the minister whether the explanation contained in four lines of the report of the proceedings of the committee on defence is a full and very careful explanation as to why the department did not accept the recommendations of the Suttie commission?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): I do not know to which four lines the hon. member is referring, Mr. Speaker, but I think the explanation I gave was fair and reasonable.

Mr. Churchill: Now that the minister is in a fair and reasonable mood, Mr. Speaker, may I ask him whether he considers this to be a careful explanation of a departmental decision; and I quote his words as they are recorded at page 806 of the report of the special committee on defence, in its minutes of pro-