

Could the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tell the House whether the companies concerned have been informed of the study conducted by the department and whether they have been requested to co-operate in the matter?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I could not give a definite answer to this question. I will make inquiries and will then be pleased to pass the information on to the hon. member.

[English]

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry. Has his department been checking this particular pulp mill for effluent containing mercury in the James Bay area?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

ALLEGED DEMOTION OF K. A. STEAD BECAUSE OF INABILITY TO SPEAK SECOND LANGUAGE

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. I gave him notice yesterday and I feel sure he has looked into it. Has the Prime Minister investigated the charge made by the Public Service Alliance that Mr. K. A. Stead, a civil servant of 30 years standing, has been demoted from his position as chief of the education and extension services branch of the National Museum to a clerical job because of his inability to speak a second language even though he is at present taking a second language course and, I am told, doing very well at it? If the charge is correct, would the Prime Minister advise the House what action the government is planning to take to correct this injustice?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did inform me that he would be asking the question. He would perhaps get a more lengthy answer if he could wait until the minister in charge of the department is on duty in the House but, as best I am able, perhaps I can deal with the question.

I did discuss the matter with the Secretary of State who told me he asked for a report on the complaints to which the hon. member refers. He has had no report as of the moment I am speaking. I might say that it remains the government's policy that supervisors are expected to communicate with their subordinates in the language of the subordinate. In the matter of establishing French or English-speaking units within the Public Service, our policy remains the same. I did write to all deputy ministers quite some time ago suggesting that they come up with a list of possibilities for the establishment of unilingual services. It is only after I have had that list and after I have had their recommendations as to the possibilities of implementing them that such units will be established.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Prime Minister has not advised the House whether or not this charge of demotion is correct, and has not said what the government intends to do about it. Will he ask the minister to report to the House on his first appearance here next week on this specific matter and answer the specific question? In view of the fact that this sort of thing appears to be occurring fairly regularly at the present time, would the Prime Minister give serious consideration to making amendments to the Public Service Employment Act to guarantee by law the kind of protection to civil servants who speak only one language that was promised to the House and the country by Prime Minister Pearson when he introduced the legislation?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, on the first question I repeat that the minister has asked for a report and, as I said, the report has not been received yet, so obviously I cannot comment on this case at the moment. The hon. member should know that the minister does not administer the National Museum. It is administered independently and he is only answerable for it. It is not something that happened within his department. Therefore he has to ask the museum for a report, which has not come in. In answer to the second question, I do not admit the premise.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary to the Prime Minister.

Does he not think that the hon. member who is so touchy regarding unilingualism and bilingualism should be reminded that people speaking French only have been bearing for over 50 years what he now fears suffering?

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to hon. members that we appear to be entering the field of debate at this point. This is not really the time to enter on a debate and the Chair is now prepared to recognize the hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. What I said was attacked by an hon. member. I say that my objective in all of this is to protect French-speaking civil servants in exactly the same way as I hope to be able to protect English-speaking civil servants.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

INTERPROVINCIAL MARKETING—REQUEST FOR REFERENCE TO SUPREME COURT—INTERVENTION IN CASE BEFORE QUEBEC COURT

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Minister of Justice. Now that the province of Alberta has become the sixth province to let down the iron curtain against the importation of agricultural products, a situation which means that more