

Inquiries of the Ministry

cannot at the same time as we are conducting government by consultation and discussion be accused of conducting government by surprise. We are not conducting a shell game of uncertainty. We are discussing these questions at great length with the Canadian public, and there is hardly substance there for government by surprise.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, in view of the concern of many Canadians with respect to these moves by the government, and the respective interest both in mainland and nationalist China, would the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State for External Affairs very shortly make a statement with respect to our position on both of these countries, and the proposal we plan to set forward, so that we can have increased communications with mainland China and carry on some kind of effective communication with nationalist China?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we hope this will be the result of our policy; but once again I repeat the position of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, that we plan to enter into consultation with the Peking government. This will be done at a time and in a place which we will decide; but until both consultations have begun we do not want to take a position on the government of Taiwan.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I did not clarify my supplementary question enough. I think it is important, as I am sure the Prime Minister would agree, that before any major changes are made—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please—

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): —we should have a clear statement from the government.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the Prime Minister relating to the same subject, and asked from the opposite position from that taken by the other hon. members who have asked questions. I would like to know from the right hon. Prime Minister if he would be kind enough to tell us whether the direct discussions with Peking regarding an exchange of representatives have started. I gather they have not started yet and, if so, would the Prime Minister indicate whether any definite date for the commencement of those talks has been set?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker, the talks have not begun, nor have we fixed a date. We are now in the process of finding a foreign capital to which both Peking and the government of Canada are accredited, and which would be an appropriate place for these talks to take place.

Mr. Lewis: In view of the fact that, contrary to expressions used this morning, the government of Taiwan does not represent any part of China, and in view of the fact that the government of that country occupies the absurd position of having a permanent seat on the Security Council, as a big power—

Mr. Diefenbaker: What is this—a speech?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please—

Mr. Lewis: —and since it is not a big power—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member would start to ask his question.

Mr. Lewis: With respect, Mr. Speaker, in view of the line which previous questions took, I had to indicate that I am asking this question to make sure that my question is understood in the proper context. I would like to ask the right hon. gentleman whether the government is also initiating discussions to have the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek removed from the permanent seat on the Security Council, in order to make room for a seat by mainland China, to which that seat belongs?

Mr. Trudeau: Well, Mr. Speaker, the house will recall that at the session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1966 Canada's position as stated by the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Hon. Paul Martin, was that this should be done, that some provision should be made—

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Not in 1968.

Mr. Trudeau: I will explain the point if you will be patient. The position was taken that the People's Republic of China should be the China recognized in the charter. We were not able to get off the ground with that position, although we did a great deal of lobbying with some friendly countries. It was then that we decided perhaps the best way to proceed was through bilateral action by Canada; but we cannot persuade the 130 or so countries of the United Nations to do this, with some majority.

An hon. Member: You mean one country.