

Supply—External Affairs

I should like to say at the outset that I am happy the house has agreed to limit the time of discussion on estimates. I hope we can come to this kind of an agreement often. Someone charged me the other day with having made a backroom deal with a certain minister in the Liberal party. If I had any deal at all with the minister, it was not a backroom deal but a frontroom deal. In any event we did get the job done. By limiting the time for debate on estimates we know where we are and we can thrash out our problems within that period of time.

An hon. Member: It was a Pickersgill-Woolliams amendment.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Chairman, I heard someone say that it was a Pickersgill-Woolliams amendment. Whatever it was, it was a good thing, because we completed our consideration of redistribution.

On November 17 I directed a question on orders of the day to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. That question in part, as it appears in *Hansard* at page 10154, is as follows:

In view of the coming apparent change of attitude of the United States toward China, particularly with reference to recognition of China, does the minister not think now is the time for Canada to take a lead by diplomatically recognizing China and thus put his words into action?

The minister answered as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the validity of the premise—

The hon. member for Oxford, who has had a considerable amount of experience in external affairs, said that it seemed to be common knowledge to anyone who reads the Sunday New York *Times*, and other newspapers, that there is going to be a change in the attitude of the United States in its policy toward China. The minister obtains his information from the officials of his department, which I think is one of the best departments of our government and always does an excellent job for the country, whether the Conservatives or Liberals are in power, because we all agree about fundamental problems, and seem to disagree only when there is a crisis. This is also because we must have continuity in our international policies.

The minister stated in answer to my question:

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the validity of the premise involved in my hon. friend's question—

I really do not think that was what the minister meant. He then said:

[Mr. Woolliams.]

—therefore I could not usefully answer the remaining part of the question.

Most members I suppose would let it go at that, but I am not one to let these things die, and I asked this supplementary question:

Is the government prepared to recognize China?

I put my question in plain ordinary terms, and the minister stated:

As I said last week, Mr. Speaker, I dealt with this matter rather fully on May 22, 1964.

I then asked another supplementary question which involved the point which I believe was developed by the hon. member for Greenwood and the hon. member for Medicine Hat, this afternoon. For once the opposition seems to be in agreement. This is the question I then asked:

A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since May, 1964, have the circumstances changed?

I would not think that the minister wanted to leave the impression in this house that the circumstances had not changed since May 22, 1964, the date of his great speech. My question then was:

In view of the fact that China now has some knowledge and information about nuclear weapons, has the attitude of the minister or the government changed or remained static since May, 1964?

We knew that China had experimented with some sort of an atomic bomb, although we do not know just what kind. The government of Canada may know, but that may be a secret of the cabinet.

I asked the minister:

Has the attitude of the minister or the government changed or remained static since May, 1964?

He then answered in this way:

Mr. Speaker, these additional factors, to which my hon. friend directs our attention, naturally are playing a part in studies that are current.

He did not answer my question. He did not say whether the government of Canada was going to recognize China, or whether the government of Canada was working in conjunction with the government of the United States, our friends and allies with which we work on the American continent, toward negotiating discussions on this problem.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, I am sure my hon. friend will recognize that this is an important matter. I have already informed the hon. member for Medicine Hat that this matter is now being discussed with a number of countries.

Mr. Woolliams: That is one reason why this problem should be aired this afternoon. We