

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, January 23, 1969

The house met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Fifth report of standing committee on finance, trade and economic affairs, in French and in English—Mr. Gaston Clermont (Gatineau).

[Note: Text of foregoing report appears in today's Votes and Proceedings.]

[English]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NATIONALIST CHINA—INQUIRY AS TO POSSIBLE CHANGE IN POLICY

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs a question about something I read in the press—an announcement which I think might better have been made in the house. I should ask whether the statement attributed to him yesterday, that Canadian policy with regard to Nationalist China would be the subject of negotiation, indicates a change in government policy, or in the two China policy set forth by the Prime Minister some time ago.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, this government has never enunciated a two China policy. I am sure the hon. gentleman will agree that when we hold these discussions with the Chinese authorities which, according to this government, have as their objective the recognition of the Peking regime, the question of Formosa will of course be a subject for negotiation.

Mr. Stanfield: The hon. gentleman has indicated that the question of the Formosan

government is to be negotiated. Has the government been in touch with the Taiwan government about this matter, and is there anything the minister can report to the house in this connection?

Mr. Sharp: The views of the Canadian government have been made public. Indeed one of the stated objects of the government is to bring about mutual recognition between Peking and Ottawa. The authorities of the Nationalist government know this, they have discussed it with me, and understand its implications.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): I should like to ask the minister whether, if he institutes discussions with the government of the People's Republic of China, he will make inquiries about the methods used by the government of that country in handling its relations with the press.

Mr. Stanfield: Could the Secretary of State say whether a position has actually been taken by the government of Canada with regard to the timing of contacts with the representatives of Communist China or, if not, when such decision might be taken? Can the minister indicate where contacts with representatives of Red China are likely to take place?

Mr. Sharp: No decision has yet been reached. The subject is now before cabinet for decision, and when decisions are made they will of course be made public.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

COMMUNICATIONS AS A DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITY

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I should like to address a question to the Postmaster General arising out of a speech he made last night indicating that the post office might branch out into other forms of communication, including telephones. I should like to ask the Postmaster General whether his intention is to include telephone communications as part of the activities of the post office, particularly in view of the continued increases in