

external affairs the leader of the opposition complained that in the statement I had made earlier in the afternoon I had ignored China. In his words, it appeared as if I was almost unaware of China's existence so far as that statement was concerned. He suggested it would have been better if I had been able to give the house some information on the question of the recognition or non-recognition of the communist government in China.

On that point I would say that this is a matter now before the government for consideration. It is a very difficult and complicated question indeed, as will be apparent from the fact that countries such as the United Kingdom and India have recognized the communist government in China, while other countries such as the United States and France have not done so. Therefore the question arises whether the government, in the midst of difficult and somewhat delicate discussions on the matter, should make public at this time all the arguments for and against a particular course of action.

I can assure you that when in the light of all the facts a decision is made, it will be given immediately to the House of Commons and to the country. Of course under our parliamentary system that decision is the responsibility of the government--as indeed the leader of the opposition himself indicated the other night. At that time he warned us of haste in this matter. To use his own words:

We are under no compulsion to act hastily, but I believe we are under great compulsion as a nation to act with caution, with great care and after a full examination of all the consequences that would flow from recognition at this time.

I agree entirely with that, and indeed we are acting with great caution. One reason for delay--and it is only one reason, of course--is to give to hon. members a chance to state in this house their point of view on this question. Indeed, the request was made to the government by hon. members opposite that they should be given an opportunity to express their point of view on this matter before we came to a decision. They have had that opportunity. The C.C.F. party has indicated its position. The Conservative party, through its leader and the Conservative members in the house, have had an opportunity to express their views. As a result, these views will be of value to the government in coming to a decision.

In his statement the other night it seemed to me that the leader of the opposition jumped to a completely wrong conclusion on inadequate evidence when he said that a decision seems to have been made. The evidence he quoted for coming to that conclusion was a statement made by General McNaughton. The leader of the opposition used these words, as reported at page 462 of Hansard:

Let us see what it was that was under consideration in the remarks of General McNaughton when he made it quite clear that early recognition is under consideration or has actually been decided upon.

Those remarks of General McNaughton, indeed his whole statement, meant nothing of the kind. In the statement to which reference has been made, General McNaughton said--and I quote from his speech as it was quoted at page 459 of Hansard:

Unfortunately the further progress of these meetings--