

# THE SENATE

Thursday, April 22, 1971

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. Donald Smith:** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding Rule 45(1)(g), I move that when the Senate adjourns today it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, April 27, 1971, at 8 o'clock in the evening.

Motion agreed to.

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

### PACIFIC AREA STUDY—PROGRESS REPORT OF COMMITTEE

**Hon. John B. Aird:** Honourable senators, the Easter recess has provided a valuable opportunity for stocktaking and planning in the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs. I would like to take a few minutes now to bring the chamber up to date on the progress and the outlook of our committee's Pacific inquiry.

In line with the pattern of our Caribbean study, the committee has proceeded with an in-depth examination of the varied aspects of Canada's relations with the Pacific countries. It is no great confession to say that none of us on the committee has found this an easy task. The area is so vast and complex that a clear focus is only obtained very gradually. However, I believe that this is now happening as a result of sustained effort by the committee and excellent contributions by our witnesses.

I must pay tribute to our members. They have maintained their interest throughout, and our meetings have been consistently well attended, with wide participation. In addition, the committee and its compact staff have continued to work as an effective and cohesive team from the outset of the inquiry.

Once again it has appeared that the committee can serve a special role as a continuing forum for discussion of particular aspects of Canada's foreign relations. Once again this continuing dialogue has been of value in updating and assessing contemporary Canadian thinking and, hopefully, formulating proposals for action. On the whole, then, I am sure that all committee members feel justified in our original initiative in undertaking this specific inquiry.

It seems particularly appropriate to comment on this study at this time in view of the dramatic developments taking place in the foreign relations of the People's Republic of China. I need hardly recite the events in question. They have been a source of daily fascination for most Canadians and for others all around the world. Obviously it is not yet possible to be certain of the full

meaning of these happenings, but it seems clear that there are some new grounds for optimism about China's place in the world.

To Canadians, and to the Western world generally, the means chosen for signalling these changes may seem strange. It appears, however, that great significance is given to these gestures and to the subtle nuances that they convey. It seems safe to say that China's leaders are opening up their vast country to the view of the West and are permitting and, in fact, encouraging expanded people-to-people contacts. A ready response should be forthcoming. It is my view that through this kind of contact—that is to say, people-to-people contact—communication and mutual understanding can be best advanced, and the most durable base laid for future relationships on a wider scale.

The members of our committee are all aware of the need for greater knowledge and understanding of the countries of East Asia. This has been one of the main objectives of our hearings to date. In particular, the committee benefited considerably from the insight of two Canadian experts who are now revisiting Peking. Mr. Mark Gayn, chief of the Asia Bureau of the *Toronto Star*, appeared last November, and Mr. Chester Ronning was heard at the end of February. I commend the proceedings of these two meetings to all honourable senators. They give a great deal of perspective to these recent events.

Naturally, our concentration in the committee has been largely on Canadian relations with the countries of the Pacific. In recent days I think it has become apparent that, in dealing with China, Canada is still in an exceptionally good position because, in fact, the lines of communication have never been completely closed. Canada and China have for years engaged in mutually beneficial trade, and journalists have been exchanged.

In this context I might mention particularly the first-rate coverage maintained over the years by Mr. Norman Webster and his predecessors of the Peking Bureau of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. I have here this morning's edition, under Mr. Webster's by-line, which I call to your attention, "Life's Not So Bad in Peking." It is a most interesting article.

The successful conclusions of negotiations for diplomatic recognition clearly involved significant Canadian initiative and example, which a number of other nations are following. The recent appointment of the respective ambassadors testifies to the continuing importance attached to Canadian-Chinese relations by both governments.

Honourable senators, it is not unlikely that Canada will serve again to break new ground in widening western relations with China. I believe that we should willingly