

Mr. KNOWLES: But you are not here?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: Government is here.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, if there are no further questions this morning, Mr. Pearson asked to be excused at 12.15.

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: I could go on for another five minutes.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions on this matter?

Mr. FLEMING: I do not want to take more time.

The CHAIRMAN: We would not like to take a new subject and leave it open without there being time for the minister to answer.

Mr. KNOWLES: I suppose the same answer would be made by the minister if this question came up at any informal discussion?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: We might not even know about informal discussions, but however it came we would have to decide in the light of the circumstances and the decision would have to be made in Ottawa, but I do not want to give the impression that this is likely to happen because I do not think this matter is likely to come up in Geneva. That is only my opinion.

Mr. FLEMING: Mr. Knowles' question was also on my next question—has there been any exchange in views as between the Canadian government and, say, the government of the United Kingdom, or the government of the United States in relation to the subject of recognition of the communist government of China or in any way that could throw light on the question whether it may be expected to arise in any form in the agenda in the Geneva Conference?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: To my knowledge there has been no such discussion between those two governments on the subject preparatory to the conference.

Mr. FLEMING: I said between the Canadian government and either of those governments?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: I thought you said the United States and United Kingdom governments. I speak subject to correction in this, it is the kind of thing I want to be absolutely correct about, and I will check what I say—but to my knowledge we have not had discussions on that subject because, as far as we are concerned, it is not on the agenda of this conference and we have not raised it as a hypothetical question.

Mr. FLEMING: Over how long a period have there been no communications on the subject between the Canadian government on the one hand and the other governments on the other?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: In recent days we have been exchanging views between the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the governments of Australia and New Zealand and other governments as to the agenda, procedure and policy to be adopted in Geneva. We try to do that before we go to such conferences; it is a wise thing to do—that is consultation through preliminary exchanges of views. We have a couple of weeks more. This hypothetical question of recognition coming up at the conference has not arisen.

Mr. Low: Mr. Chairman, just on that very point—in the discussions that took place preparatory to the Geneva Conference did Russia at any time lay down as a condition of yielding to the conference that China should be recognized?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: No, to the best of my knowledge the Russians have laid down no such condition and I should have added to my previous observation on this matter that one reason I should have thought the Canadian government would not raise this particular point, at least at this stage, is that the United States government has made its position very clear in this matter.

Mr. FLEMING: May I come back again? Apart from the agenda of the forthcoming Geneva Conference, when was the last communication on the sub-