

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Lewis: Did the minister during the explanation make clear to the ambassador from Taiwan this government's intention to proceed to negotiate toward recognition of mainland China?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I informed the ambassador of the nationalist government of China exactly what I have told this house, and what has been made known to the public; that is, it is the policy of this government to bring about a mutual recognition between Peking and Ottawa. I told him we had made no change in our policy, and also that the matters of timing and procedure were still before cabinet for decision.

Mr. Lewis: Would the minister inform the house whether he informed the ambassador of the Taiwan government of the same thing the minister was reported to have said on television, if I understood it correctly, namely that if recognition of Peking should mean some break with Taiwan, the government was prepared for that.

Mr. Sharp: It was one of the questions with respect to which the ambassador came to me to seek clarification.

Mr. Lewis: We are in the dark, too.

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, in view of the questions and answers which have gone before, may I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether in his view it is necessary for him, the Prime Minister or the government of Canada to consult with or seek the advice of the United States in respect of any decision they are making in connection with diplomatic relations with any country or any government.

Mr. Sharp: I think it is very much in the interests of Canada that we should inform our friends in advance of such an important matter.

SATELLITES—EXCHANGE OF LETTERS
BETWEEN FRANCE AND QUEBEC

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, speaking of information from friends, my question is with reference to a question answered by the Prime Minister which I had asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs concerning the Paris talks. Will the minister say if he has obtained advice as to whether or not communications fall under the umbrella agreement of 1965, particularly in reference to the announced

intention of France and Quebec to exchange technicians and engineers in connection with the symphonie satellites project, which is an international undertaking? Would the minister undertake to make a statement on this important matter.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have now received copies of the letters that were exchanged between the government of Quebec and the government of France. I am not yet in a position to comment on them, but I suspect there will be other occasions by way of a statement or by way of answers to specific questions when I will be pleased to do so.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

NATO—POSSIBILITY OF CANADIAN WITHDRAWAL—REQUEST FOR HOUSE DEBATE

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the Postmaster General was expressing the view of the government during the week end when he said that he believed Canadian participation in NATO was completely useless?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. The Postmaster General was stating a case for withdrawal from NATO, but it was in the context, perfectly explained by him, of the debate in respect of the review which is going on regarding foreign policy. He was stating, shall we say, the antithesis of the thesis being stated at this moment by the Minister of National Defence in a speech he is making here in Ottawa today to the Rotary Club. We, as the government, will have to make a synthesis of these two points of view, and I am sure all ministers will contribute.

Mr. Hees: In view of the statements that have been made both by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Prime Minister to the effect that Canada intends to continue its present participation in NATO, is it the intention of the government that ministers shall be free to express views contrary to government policy in this regard?

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence said today, when addressing the Rotary club of Ottawa:

—continued participation in NATO is essential to Canada's security interests at the present time.

Was he expressing government policy?