

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 13, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PROCEDURE AND ORGANIZATION

Seventh report of Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization—Mr. Blair.

[*Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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NATURAL RESOURCES

REPORT BY MINISTER OF ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES
ON MISSION TO AUSTRALIA

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to report briefly to the House on the Canadian government mission to Australia which I headed from April 28 to May 6, 1971. Our purpose was to promote a continuing exchange of information on the development and marketing of natural resources in our respective countries. Our visit was in accordance with the statement made in Australia a year ago by the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), with the Australian Prime Minister, establishing an objective of increasing contact by ministers and officials in areas of common interest.

It was generally agreed in talks which we held with federal and state ministers and officials and with persons in the private sector that Canada and Australia faced many similar problems in developing natural resources, in particular matters relating to the foreign investor, further processing of resources, the provision of infrastructure and in obtaining the maximum opportunity in world markets for our commodities.

● (2:10 p.m.)

In a joint statement made in Canberra on April 30, 1971, by myself and the Hon. R. W. Swartz, the Australian Minister of National Development, we outlined the topics and views which arose in our discussions which were conducted in an atmosphere of friendship and frankness. These ranged over the following: Foreign investment policies and the role of the countries' respective banking systems in such policies; an exchange of information on matters concerning minerals and metals in world markets; matters connected with particular mineral commodities which Canada and Australia produce. These included uranium, copper, iron ore, nickel, lead, zinc, sulphur, aluminum and coal; national philosophies and approaches to energy, mining and resource development, mining legislation and relations between

central governments and other administrations and provincial governments in Canada and state governments in Australia.

The minerals industry in Australia has experienced spectacular growth since the end of world war II. Australia will become an even more important mineral exporter in 1971 and years ahead, chiefly because of increased sales of iron ore, coal, bauxite, alumina and nickel.

Australia has uncovered significant and rich deposits of uranium. Canada shares a common interest, particularly in the short term, when the uranium market may be soft, in continuing liaison with Australia on the marketing of uranium.

We were informed that the Commonwealth Government of Australia has now under consideration the decision with respect to its nuclear programs and we put forward the Canadian position with respect to the various modifications of Canada's CANDU reactor which could be made available to meet Australia's needs.

It is in the interest of both our countries to get the optimum price for our raw resources, and to achieve maximum economic processing at home, and thus to leave the maximum amount of the dollars in our respective countries in the form of taxes, profits and in wages from resource development for the growth of our own economies. It was clearly agreed that in working more closely together and having a continuing association we can best assure these objectives.

The talks were the most comprehensive of their kind concerning natural resources ever conducted between the two countries, and mark a new aspect of the role of Canada in the affairs of the Pacific basin, in line with the government white paper on foreign policy.

I can report to the House that we expect to continue these discussions with the Hon. R. W. Swartz, Commonwealth Minister of National Development, here at Ottawa within the next two to three months.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I was about to enter a mild complaint about the fact that a copy of the statement we have just heard reached my desk only a few seconds ago, although that may not be the minister's fault, leaving me with insufficient time in which to prepare to comment on it. But having read it and listened to him it is obvious that I had ample time in which to do so. I suggest to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that judging from the language of this communiqué the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources must be considered a strong candidate for his position.

The statement contains some sensational passages; I shall refer to two of them. The minister said: "We outlined the topics and views which arose in our discus-