

Briefly, the reason is not unlike that offered by a distinguished mountaineer when asked why he continued to attempt the conquest of Mount Everest: "Because it is there!" The effective Government of China is, and has been for almost 20 years, the Government in Peking. For much of that time, Canada has been expanding and developing relations with China in a number of fields, and in some of them - particularly trade - our relations with China have become important to us. But if China is important to Canada, one has only to open a newspaper almost any day to appreciate that China has come to occupy an important, perhaps even critical, position in today's world. If a stable basis for peace in the world can be found, it is clear that China must participate in the finding. If Asian problems are to be solved, China must take part in their solution.

Given these facts, and the growing importance of China both to Canada and to the world, the question is not really "Why should Canada recognize Peking?" but "Why should Canada not seek diplomatic relations with the world's most populous nation?" In our view, the normal, logical and reasonable thing would be to have diplomatic relations with a country of such importance. However, since the issues involved are obviously highly controversial ones in the international community, it had been the position of the Canadian Government that it might be more appropriate for a country such as Canada to place first priority on a resolution of these problems in the context of the United Nations. In the absence of such a solution, it is now our best judgment that whatever uncertainties and disadvantages there may have been are unlikely to outweigh the arguments for trying to normalize our relations with the People's Republic of China.

In the Canadian Parliament and elsewhere, I have, in the months since the Canadian Government's intentions with respect to China were first declared, been asked many questions on the position of Taiwan. I have not been able to give a great deal of satisfaction to my questioners in Canada in this respect and I am afraid I shall not be able to tell you a great deal either. Clearly, the nature of our relations with Taiwan must change if we enter into diplomatic relations with Peking, for one cannot maintain diplomatic relations with two regimes both claiming to speak for the same country. What exactly these subsequent relations might be I cannot say, for this does not depend on the decision of the Canadian Government only. As for the status of Taiwan, it would be presumptuous for the Canadian Government to pronounce upon it one way or the other. The status of Taiwan is essentially something for the Chinese to work out, for both Peking and Taipei now regard Taiwan as a province of China. As I said in the Canadian House of Commons, when we recognize other countries we do not necessarily recognize all their territorial claims or challenge them, and we have the same approach to Taiwan.

We are fully aware that the Government of Canada and the Government of Japan view the question of recognition of Communist China in a somewhat different light - and we recognize that our interests may well be different. We have, however, kept in close contact with the Japanese Government as our plans developed and have listened carefully to what they had to say. We shall continue to do so, and we hope that they understand the reasoning which has led us to this step.

Vietnam

Another major anchor-point in Canada's Asian-Pacific perspective is our presence as a member of the International Control Commissions in Vietnam,