

MR. B.A. SANTAMARIA'S COMMENT

Statement by the Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Trade,
Mr. McEwen.

When asked today to react to a comment by Mr. B.A. Santamaria, Secretary of the National Catholic Rural Movement, upon a report of an answer by him on a Melbourne television show on Sunday night, the Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Mr. McEwen, said:-

"I made two points. First that considerations of trade with mainland China would definitely not influence the Government's policy regarding political recognition of the Communist Chinese Government. I then added that if the present Government of mainland China remained the Government - and it certainly appeared that that was likely - then in due course, at some point of time, the fact would be recognised by all countries as it has already been recognised by the United Kingdom and most great powers.

"In reply to a further question, I added that the recent visit to Australia of officials of the Government Trading Agency of mainland China had no significance whatever to the question of political recognition by Australia. I pointed out that in any Communist country all trading was necessarily conducted by officials of government agencies.

"The recent Chinese buying and selling mission was not the result of any invitation or suggestion by the Australian Government.

"Mr. Santamaria is quite wrong in suggesting that there has been any shift of policy by the Australian Government. Considerations of high policy will continue to decide our attitude to political recognition of mainland China."

Mr. McEwen added that he had forwarded to Mr. Santamaria a transcription of the actual television interview which is recorded as a normal practice by the television station and which made the above quite clear.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.

2nd June, 1959