

Inquiries of the Ministry

suggesting that a pause of one day to be made at this time be extended over a period of weeks to enable the possibility of a resort to the conference table?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there have been recent discussions between the government of Canada and particular governments involved in the situation in Viet Nam. In so far as the government of the United States is concerned, in the suggestions that were made by the Canadian government based on the Geneva accords for a physical disengagement in the demilitarized zone, the government of Canada pointed out that this involved a cessation of bombing against the north, or any military action from the south or elsewhere against the north. We have not had any reaction from the government of the United States to this phase of the suggestions that we have put forward.

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, were it not that the minister is noted for his clarity I would ask for an explanation. However, I will put a further question to him. Has there been any acceptance of the suggestion that the neutral zone be widened? When the minister states that there should be a pause, did he mean a pause within the suggested additional neutral area?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has not suggested an expansion of the area of the demilitarized zone. This was a proposal made by the government of the United States. The first proposal of the Canadian government was that there should be a degree of physical disengagement by all the parties. We took the position that this would have to include the bombings and any other military action against North Viet Nam, whether actually undertaken from South Viet Nam or from some other point of origin.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Was there any reaction from North Viet Nam?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The Canadian commissioner, Mr. Dier, was in Hanoi from April 31 until the middle of last week. He has had discussions with top personalities in the government of the north, and as the result of a request made by the government of the

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

north I am not at liberty to communicate to the house the nature of those conversations.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): On a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister whether in view of his statement in New York during a press interview we can take it that the proposals he advanced on behalf of the Canadian government were not fully acceptable to the government of the United States?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I do not believe the four propositions were fully acceptable to the government of the United States. I have already implied this in the reply I made to the right hon. gentleman a few moments ago, when I said that the proposal for a degree of physical disengagement would involve cessation of bombing.

Mr. Douglas: I have a further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the minister which of the four proposals made by the Canadian government were not acceptable to the government of the United States? Was it only the one on bombing, or were there others?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): There was no particularization by the United States government respecting any one of the four proposals, but I should think that the second, third and fourth proposals would probably be acceptable.

Mr. David MacDonald (Prince): Mr. Speaker, earlier in the session the minister indicated that the external aid department was looking into the possibility of bringing Vietnamese civilians to Canada for rehabilitation. I wonder whether we can expect a progress report on that particular plan.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to report at the moment.

Mr. MacDonald (Prince): On a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister when we can expect a report. I believe this has been under consideration for some time.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes.

[Translation]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

QUEBEC CITY—REPORTED LAY-OFFS AT
GRAIN ELEVATOR

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.