

*Viet Nam*

closing, I should like to quote another great statesman, Sir Winston Churchill.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Who was the first?

**Mr. Hopkins:** He had this to say in the British House of Commons on July 13, 1934:

I have been trying to seek out for myself what would be the best way of preventing war, and it has seemed to me that the League of Nations should be the great instrument upon which all those resolves to maintain peace should centre, and that we should all make our contribution to the League of Nations.

We know that over the years since then we have time and time again attempted to maintain peace in the world. Our debate on Viet Nam today is just another example of this. What really should be emphasized in this debate should be emphasized in every debate on peacekeeping duty and on settling conflicts in the world. First of all, the prevention of the destruction of life and the destruction of property. Second, the fact that even though men far greater than we are have failed in the past, as the minister stated this afternoon, is no reason why we should ever stop trying.

I am sure we all extend our very best wishes for success to our Canadian contingent in Viet Nam. We hope they will be successful in bringing all parties together in an amicable manner. As a member who has a large military establishment in his constituency, I should like to extend my personal thanks to the Governor General, to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) and to the Chief of the Defence Staff for visiting Montreal on the weekend and giving our troops a good boost in morale before they left for Viet Nam.

I might add that the rumours we hear that this move by us has caused bad morale in the armed forces are rumours I cannot buy, because I have talked to members of the forces first-hand. If anything, it has increased morale in the armed forces; they feel proud to be called upon for duty and they feel they are performing a very useful role not only for Canada but for the world.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East):** Mr. Speaker, I must remind the parliamentary secretary before he finishes collecting his notes that if the members of the Canadian armed forces who have gone to Viet Nam do have a reason to feel good, it is because of the contribution they are making. No other group of Canadians has been so neglected in the history of this country than these people by this government. They have been deprived of the resources for adequate training, operating under a frozen budget for the last four or five years. It is no wonder they feel good about having something to do. What is regrettable, as my distinguished colleague for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) pointed out, is the haste with which and the confusion under which they have gone into what is in fact, a theatre of war.

• (2140)

**Mr. Hopkins:** There is no confusion with them. They are well organized.

**Mr. Sharp:** It is you who are confused.

[Mr. Hopkins.]

**Mr. Forrestall:** It is regrettable. I would like to remind the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) that the government has made a deliberate decision not to let this matter come to a vote tonight. I would remind him that never before have Canadians been sent into a theatre of war without an opportunity given for an expression of opinion by the representatives of the people in this chamber.

**Mr. Sharp:** You are having your chance. Go ahead and express yourself.

**Mr. Baldwin:** We want a vote.

**Mr. Forrestall:** They are there to supervise a cease-fire, and I repeat that it is regrettable that the members of this House are not able to express an opinion. I do not mean express an opinion about the decision that has been taken. It is not in dispute. The government acted. It had to act. A basic decision was taken. What we are seeking is an opportunity for an expression of opinion by the people of the country on what happens in 60 days' time. I intend to sit down five minutes before ten o'clock to see whether anyone on the other side of the House rises to talk out this motion. If that happens it will be a matter of regret and shame, not only for the government benches but for the entire House. I would remind the cackling hens over there that this House is the voice of our country, not the 28 or 30 men who happen to sit on the executive benches. They took their decision. As I say, I do not dispute the necessity and urgency of their decision, nor do I question the confusion and uncertainty in which that decision was taken. I do not think anybody in the world does. As other hon. members have said, we welcome at least a semblance of determination to try and bring about a cease-fire in Viet Nam.

No one in this House or in the country has a greater love or deeper respect for the members of the Canadian armed forces than I do. But that is not what we are talking about now. We are talking about something else. I reiterate that it is now very apparent that members of the government do not want this matter to come to a vote, and I wonder why. We could go back to the war debates in 1914 and read the speeches of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, one of the great and distinguished Liberals. As a matter of fact, we should all re-read the speeches made in that extraordinary session of parliament. We should also read the speeches of our late and loved Prime Minister Pearson, speeches made so few years ago.

All of these men, throughout all the opportunities and challenges that Canada had to go out into the world and assist in the maintenance of peace, brought the matter to this chamber and sought its direction, its counsel, its support and guidance. It is a matter of regret that this parliament has not had that opportunity.

I wanted to rise tonight and say a few words about several aspects of Canada's participation in Viet Nam. I wanted to regret, as forcefully as I could, the government's decision that it was necessary to send a provocative instrument of war, fully armed and carrying, if you will, missiles into waters contiguous to Vietnamese waters. I just wonder what else it carries. I regret that that had to be done.