

Oral Questions

SOCIAL SECURITY

OLD AGE AND VETERANS PENSIONS—PRESENTATION OF PETITION FOR IMMEDIATE INCREASE

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 29,880 people in Edmonton, urging all Members of Parliament "to do everything possible to bring about a significant increase in old age and veteran pensions immediately", which petition was personally presented by Mayor Ivor Dent of Edmonton this morning to an all-party delegation of members who welcomed the intention of the petitioners and the initiative of Mayor Dent. On their behalf I pray this House to accept the petition and table it.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VIET NAM—REQUEST THAT HOUSE BE CONSULTED BEFORE DECISION MADE ON CONTINUING CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN SUPERVISORY COMMISSION

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I have a question which is addressed to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wagner: In response to my friends on the other side I would say—

[*Translation*]

Some hon. Members: In French!

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister.

[*English*]

In view of the fact that no statement—

[*Translation*]

In view of the fact that the Secretary of State for External Affairs made no statement to the House on his trip to Viet Nam, can the Prime Minister assure us that parliament will be consulted officially before any decision is taken concerning our participation in Viet Nam?

Some hon. Members: In English!

Mr. Wagner: Again, at the request of my friends across the way—

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that no statement has been made to the House—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I doubt whether it is necessary for the hon. member to repeat the question in English. I would suggest to hon. members that, as we have only 40 minutes for the question period, if every question and answer are given in both French and English we

[Mr. Speaker.]

might get into difficulty. I do not want to cause any difficulty to the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe.

[*Translation*]

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I merely wish to tell the hon. member that his off the cuff translation is very good and I shall ask the minister to answer the question personally.

[*English*]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muir: Now in French.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sharp: It is my intention, Mr. Speaker—

[*English*]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: If I may translate, Mr. Speaker, it is my intention tomorrow, if I am asked by the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence to appear before it, to answer questions and give some account of the visit that my colleagues from the New Democratic Party, the Social Credit party and myself and one member of the Senate made to Viet Nam. It would be my intention to make a statement in the House just as soon as we have reached a decision on whether we are going to continue or withdraw from the commission.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to put a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

[*English*]

Would the minister please let the House know if it is the government's intention to consult the House before a decision is taken by the government on this subject?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House on a number of occasions, as is customary I think it is the responsibility of the government to make a decision and bring it before parliament. This I intend to do.

VIET NAM—MINISTER'S POSITION ON MEETING OF CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN SUPERVISORY COMMISSION

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs a question on the statement which he did make, namely, the one after his return from the Paris conference. As a result of his conversations during his recent Indochina visit, is he in any way reassured now as to the actual conditions which he declared in Paris would be essential to Canada's continued participation in the International Control and Supervisory Commission?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker. Our visit to Viet Nam tended to