

Inquiries of the Ministry

information to this effect, as I have said, from the government of India. I did add that it is clear that the commission would have to be unanimous before the commission itself could undertake the responsibility which Canada has proposed. I was told only this morning, upon making inquiries, that the high commissioner for India and the Polish ambassador here are not yet in a position to give us the official reaction of their governments.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Then perhaps I might ask one more supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the Canadian government directed the Canadian representative on the commission to communicate with the government at Hanoi with a view to bringing about a reconvening of the Geneva truce committee? What authority has been given to the Canadian representative, and what report has he brought to the attention of the government?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that the Canadian member of the commission, Mr. V. C. Moore, who has succeeded in that assignment Mr. Blair Seaborn, paid his first official visit to Hanoi a few days ago. As my right hon. friend knows, the members of the commission and the commission itself make frequent visits to the capital of North Viet Nam.

Mr. Diefenbaker: When was the last time a Canadian visited Hanoi?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The last time was late last summer, after that visit to which my right hon. friend directed our attention on June 3 last. However, the visit of Mr. Moore had nothing whatever to do with the proposal that Canada has made to the other two members of the commission. Mr. Moore went there pursuant to his obligations as a member of the commission, in accordance with the well established practice of the commission.

But I may say that the Canadian government would not find itself in any way restricted from giving instructions, in connection with an opportunity that might exist, if it thought that this might lead to the opening of negotiations; because the government shares, with my right hon. friend and other members, the conviction that anything we can do to bring an end to the conflict is the clear duty of the government of Canada.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): May I ask a supplementary question. May I ask the minister why, if Mr. Moore was in

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

Hanoi within the last ten days and communicated with the government of North Viet Nam, this opportunity was not made use of to sound out the government of that country with a view to seeing if there were some common ground upon which negotiations might be based?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where my hon. friend got the basis for his question. Mr. Moore had a very fruitful discussion with the Prime Minister, with the foreign minister, and a vice minister in charge of defence in North Viet Nam. However, his conversations had nothing to do with the proposal that we have been discussing within India and Poland, but it was a useful discussion covering the kind of matters that would be of interest and concern to anyone in this house who wanted to see a cease fire effected, and who wanted to see an end to the conflict in Viet Nam.

Mr. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): May I ask the minister if any hopeful avenues of discussion were opened up as a result of Mr. Moore's meeting with the government in Hanoi? May I also ask if, as a result of his visit within the last few days to Washington, there seems to be any hope that the government of the United States would be prepared to include in any peace negotiations a delegation from the national liberation front of South Viet Nam?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, the fact that members of the commission are able to have access to the government at Hanoi is in itself a helpful fact. The fact that discussions did take place is also a helpful fact.

Mr. Diefenbaker: There has been five months delay since the Canadian representative was last there.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): My right hon. friend refers to a five months' delay. I am sure in a matter of such great delicacy, one which caused him to make an important pronouncement the other day about the desirability of a conference, he would want to be very helpful.

Mr. Douglas: The minister overlooked the second part of my question. I asked the minister if, as a result of his visit to Washington, he found any inclination on the part of the government of the United States to agree to a meeting with representatives of the national liberation front in any peace negotiations.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): This was not the particular reason for which I went either to