

Oral Questions

appears on the order paper as item No. 18 and which seems to haunt the government?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the resolution that I brought before the House welcomed the peace agreement, and I am sure that would have commanded the full support of the House. I am equally sure that anybody who has read and examined the amendments that were proposed would agree that they are unworkable and most dangerous. Therefore, I would hope that the House would not proceed, in the interests of the hon. member's own party, to approve them because they are quite unworkable and might result in great harm to Canadians in Viet Nam.

VIET NAM—POSSIBLE RELEASE OF LLOYD OPPEL

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I see that we have returned to this round of questions and I, too, would like to address a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Could he make any comment now on the news reports that are circulating to the effect that the Canadian, Lloyd Opiel, is likely to be released before the end of this week?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to report that Mr. Lloyd Opiel is likely to be released today.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member may ask a supplementary, and then the hon. member for Egmont. After that I will again try to move to another subject.

VIET NAM—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF CRITERIA FOR CANADA'S CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN SUPERVISORY COMMISSION

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a second question of a more general nature to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Given the multiplicity of the problems revealed in the minister's various statements to the House and in committee, will the minister give an undertaking that during the next 60 days the government will be developing and making public its criteria for Canada's participation as a truce observer, such as greater collaboration with the commission, as well as clear evidence in detail that the parties are really serious in their intent to live up to the commitments that they made to one another in Paris, so that toward the end of May a critical and objective measurement and assessment of the situation can be made?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to take exception on a procedural basis to this kind of question. This is really not a question but a statement submitted to the House in the form of a question, and is not in order. The minister may comment on the member's statement if he can do so briefly.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, since he is a member of the committee, I have appeared twice before it. I have laid down these conditions very clearly. I have tried to keep the House, and members of the commit-

[Mr. Wagner.]

tee at least, very well informed. My hon. friend from the NDP who was with me added to the information. I regret that my hon. friend was not with me, or some member of his party, so that they might have added to the information, too, but I do not think we can be faulted for having withheld information.

• (1520)

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Egmont wishes to ask a supplementary on this subject, after which we will move on the next subject.

SOUTH VIET NAM—ROLE OF SUPERVISORY COMMISSION WITH REGARD TO POLITICAL PRISONERS AND POSSIBLE ELECTIONS

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): I have a supplementary question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the particular emphasis the minister placed this afternoon on the importance of achieving some kind of political solution in South Viet Nam and the present difficulties that exist with regard to the very large number of political prisoners in that area, could the minister outline briefly whether our representatives on the ICCS will take any special initiative to see that many of these political prisoners are able to participate freely in such an election process? In view of the frustration and failure of the Red Cross to be effective in this area, will the minister be encouraging the return of the Canadian Red Cross to take a hand in that important function?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, so far there has not been notable co-operation between the Provisional Revolutionary Government and the Republic of Viet Nam Government which would be necessary to the conduct of the work of the ICCS with respect to civilian prisoners. It is laid down in the agreement that there must be some co-operation between them. So far this is one of the main things that is lacking and will become even more important in the next few weeks when the United States and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam leave the joint military commission. We shall be doing everything we can within the limited powers of the ICCS. As I said in my statement, we will be prepared to return, if necessary, to supervise elections under the agreement which would involve some of the questions raised by my hon. friend.

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HEALTH

ALLEGED SHORTAGE OF RADIOTHERAPISTS—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Is the minister aware of the acute shortage of physicians in some of the specialties, particularly radiotherapists whose specialty is treating cancer, which shortage may cause serious delays in treatment, and can the minister assure the House that this grave shortage will be corrected?