

*Viet Nam*

right hon. Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) have repeatedly explained the Canadian position vis-à-vis this conflict which has upset the world's conscience. And last October when Canada was approached and requested to be a member of the control commission, the Secretary of State for External Affairs repeatedly stated publicly and through diplomatic channels Canada's conditions for participating in the commission. As someone said this afternoon, Canada is the most experienced country in the field of peace operations. This is the reason our services were requested once the agreement was concluded.

Furthermore, when Parliament met on January 4, the Secretary of State for External Affairs explained once more to the House the conditions under which we were ready to proceed to Viet Nam.

As I recall, Mr. Speaker, on January 5, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs was explaining our position with regard to Viet Nam, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe said, and I quote:

[English]

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I should have much preferred, and I know my colleagues would have much preferred, that our first business in this House should deal immediately with urgent problems.

[Translation]

—he then enumerated domestic problems. This afternoon, he said the government acted on the sly, yet we had this debate almost in spite of him. I say, Mr. Speaker, this is too much contradicting in a new career.

What hurts me most, Mr. Speaker, is this excerpt which I quote from the speech made this afternoon by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe:

• (2010)

[English]

There can be no success—

[Translation]

I ask him why he is negative and why he shows so much despair:

[English]

There can be no success—

[Translation]

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we cannot guarantee that we are going to succeed. When he stated our position, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said, and I quote:

[English]

It is no secret to anyone that we have serious doubts about what we are being asked to undertake.

[Translation]

He repeated it this afternoon and the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) said it also. But why tell us, like an evil wisher:

[English]

There can be no success—

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, for the great misfortune of the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe, I am going to tell him some

[Mr. De Bané.]

thing. And since one hon. member of the opposition does not even bother to pick up earphone to listen to the French interpretation—

[English]

I will say it in English. It is clear from the report of our ambassador to the ICCS in Saigon that three days is perhaps too short a time to form an opinion about the prospects of this commission; however, three days of intense activity is worth a month of experience under less pressing and demanding circumstances. At the first meeting of the commission the Canadian delegation proposed that the first task or goal should be to establish contact with our opposite numbers, the joint military commission in Saigon. At that meeting the Canadian representative, Ambassador Gauvin, opened the meeting by suggesting that while the joint military commission was apparently not yet in a position to establish contact with the ICCS, we are attempting to contact the two parties, the government of the Republic of Viet Nam and the U.S., who are themselves directly involved in providing logistics support for employment of the seven regional teams.

[Translation]

I could of course report other details to show that if indeed we are not sure of succeeding, there are still some encouraging signs which tell us not to despair.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe was telling us, and this in my view is what is most surprising, and I quote:

[English]

Yet, despite the difficulties with the task and the indirect nature of our function, Canadians are there.

[Translation]

But for heaven's sake, let us realize that with all the difficulties which arise from this, Canada has no interest in sending a surveillance team to Viet Nam. We do so only because, being as the rest of the world witness to the division which has been afflicting that country for some twenty years, we thought: It is our duty to do everything possible in order to try and restore peace as soon as possible.

Now, I would like to quote a sentence that I will not qualify—I leave that to everyone of you—in order to show to what extent one can play a double game.

[English]

While that commitment was hastier than it had to be and completely out of tune with our sorry experience in Viet Nam, it is a commitment that we in this House must consider positively.

• (2020)

[Translation]

He had just said, Mr. Speaker—

[English]

There can be no success—

[Translation]

He had just said that there could be no success. Now he tells us, to please I know not whom, that we in this House must consider it positively. I could quote you other examples of similar statements. For instance, today he told us that the agreement between North Viet Nam and the United States is one in which the Canadian government