

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): May I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs if it is not true also that the truce commission's report of June, 1962, of which Canada was a signatory along with India, cited South Viet Nam as also having violated the accord by virtue of having 5,000 military advisers in their territory from the United States and refusing to co-operate with the truce commission in assessing the amount of military assistance they were receiving from the United States? In view of the fact that military advisers have now reached the figure of some 24,000 or 25,000, plus the landing of marines, would the minister not consider that the United States and South Viet Nam have equally violated the Geneva accord?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The majority report of the commission in 1962, made up of India and Canada, did draw conclusions that applied both to North and South Viet Nam. Of that there is no question. I am glad my hon. friend has mentioned this, because it shows the objective position that Canadian spokesmen in 1962, as in 1965, have taken. Canada has not hesitated to join with one of its colleagues on the commission in speaking out on matters which it felt were warranted by the terms of the accord. This also motivated Canada in the presentation of our recent minority statement.

Mr. Douglas: The objectivity of our representatives on the truce commission seems to have changed somewhat with the change of government, may I say, since 1962. May I ask the minister whether Canada has made any representations to the United States suggesting that a discontinuance of the bombing of a country with which they are not at war might be a successful prelude to the bringing about of a conference and a negotiated settlement?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I would not want the first observation of my hon. friend to stand unchallenged. The former government acted on this matter with the same diligence and responsibility that this government is endeavouring to show. The 1962 report was not dictated by the government of the day any more than the minority report in 1965 was dictated by this government.

With regard to the particular suggestion, I can only say that the Canadian government continues to pursue, with the United States and with other countries, negotiations in respect of this matter. I should like my hon. friend to realize that—I say this not critically—there are implied in his question

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

suggestions that the United States is unaware of its heavy responsibilities in this matter. Though the United States is coming in for much criticism, I would ask my hon. friend and the house to bear in mind that in this matter the United States is trying to resist a form of pressure from the north in which is involved a precedent that might well affect not only other countries in Asia but the free world generally.

Mr. Douglas: Would the minister also acknowledge that it is setting quite a precedent when a major power can bomb a smaller power with impunity? If this precedent is allowed to stand, then the whole fabric of the rule of law will completely disappear.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): There is nothing Canada would be more pleased to see than an end to this fighting in Viet Nam, but it takes two to bring about a truce, and it takes two to set up conditions that will guarantee permanent peace in the area.

EDUCATION**QUEBEC—PAYMENTS UNDER STUDENT LOANS PLAN**

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance.

Could the minister tell us if the federal government paid any amount of money to the province of Quebec under the student loans plan, under the section which provides for such payments to provinces which do not participate in the student loans plan?

[Text]

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): I will be glad to look into this, Mr. Speaker.

FINANCE**REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF TARIFF ON STEEL**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. C. W. Carter (Burin-Burgeo): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the rising cost of living, and in view of the recently proposed increase in the price of steel in Canada, which will increase the cost of living to every household in Canada, will the government consider removing the tariff on steel and tin plate in order to bring down the cost of living?