

Inquiries of the Ministry

in this regard. Would the Prime Minister comment on that?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs to answer that question, as he has been in direct touch with our representative on this point.

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I saw the statement in yesterday's press attributed to a spokesman for North Viet Nam. I will say again that our representative on the international commission went to Hanoi at the end of April; that this visit and the talk were at our request and in accordance with normal practice; that in the course of his discussions with North Vietnamese representatives he drew attention to the statement which I made before the external affairs committee on April 11. But as I said in this house, and as I say now, I have no evidence, nor have we at any time suggested that we had any evidence, that the general approach reflected in the Canadian statement has been favourably received by the government of North Viet Nam.

I want to take this opportunity also, and I regret having to do so in this way, of categorically rejecting the charge made by the government of North Viet Nam that, as they put it, "The four-stage plan of Canada is only an American plan, a part of the United States aggressors' peace negotiation hoax. It has been put forward according to a well co-ordinated program previously arranged with the Johnson clique." Indeed, as I informed the house on May 8, the proposal that there might be a cessation of all military activity against North Viet Nam, balanced by a resumption of full and effective control of the demilitarized zone by the international commission, has not met with specific acceptance by the government of the United States any more than it has been accepted by the government of North Viet Nam.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister and at the same time express the hope that the government will give serious consideration to introducing a motion on Viet Nam so the house may express its opinion on this very important matter, possibly affecting the survival of mankind.

In view of the fact that it is essential that Canada's effectiveness on the international control commission be maintained, I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he intends in the course of the next few days to introduce a

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

motion referring the statements of Mr. Gerald Clark of the *Montreal Star* and Mr. Tim Ralfe of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to the committee on external affairs just as soon as that committee is set up.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I have already twice in this house denied the statement that Canadian members of the international commission have been guilty of spying or any clandestine activity. So far as an appearance before the external affairs committee and discussion on this matter is concerned, the committee is master of its own procedure and when it is set up—and we will set it up without delay—it will be able to decide whether it wishes to discuss this particular matter.

Mr. Douglas: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the Prime Minister has already indicated his willingness to have this matter discussed by the committee on external affairs, and in view of the fact the committee cannot deal with a matter unless it is referred to it by the house, would the Prime Minister consider submitting a motion to the house referring this question to the committee on external affairs for full investigation, with the power to call witnesses and examine them under oath and to call for all the relevant documents?

Mr. Pearson: I will look into this matter, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Is it true that Hanoi has rejected the peace proposals he has put forward and is he in a position to say also whether he intends to make new peace proposals to North Viet Nam?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I think it is a fact that the Hanoi government has not, as I stated yesterday, accepted the four points that I have raised. When I raised them, I said that I held no hope at the time that such suggestions could be accepted by either side.

Naturally, the Canadian government, just like other governments, is concerned with this question and we shall seriously consider whether another *modus vivendi* can be found concerning this situation. However, I must say quite frankly that, in the present situation, there are very few reasons for optimism.