

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 6, 1965

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VIET NAM—TABLING OF REPORT RESPECTING WITHDRAWAL OF TEAMS

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to table the text, in French and in English, of the report of February 27 from the international commission for supervision and control in Viet Nam, dealing with the withdrawal of the commission's fixed teams from North Viet Nam at the instance of the government of North Viet Nam.

VIET NAM—SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER IN U.S.

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Prime Minister, but first I want to congratulate him on the honour bestowed upon him on Friday evening by the presentation of the peace award at Temple University.

I wish to ask him whether the enunciation of his views regarding the Viet Nam crisis represented a cabinet decision. I ask this because of the fact that on Friday afternoon the Secretary of State for External Affairs, in his version of the situation and Canada's views, expressed a somewhat dissimilar attitude to that of the Prime Minister in his extramural speech.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): When I spoke, Mr. Speaker, I was of course speaking as the leader of the government, with the knowledge and approval of my colleagues. What I said did not in my view contradict in any way what was said by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but may have gone a little further than he went on Friday afternoon.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would the Prime Minister say whether the reaction of the President of the United States indicated that the suggestion of a pause, measured or otherwise, was refreshing to him?

Mr. Pearson: He was very interested in it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Before the Prime Minister made his speech had he discussed the matter in any way with the officials of the Department of External Affairs, and had there been any exchange of views in this respect with the United States administration before the speech was delivered?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, statements on external affairs are normally discussed with the Secretary of State for External Affairs who takes the responsibility for discussions in his department. The particular statement on Friday night was not taken up with the United States government or any United States authority before it was delivered, although our views in general in regard to Viet Nam were well known to them.

● (2:40 p.m.)

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): My question is addressed to the Prime Minister, and it has to do with a press conference which he and President Johnson held at Camp David. Reports indicate that Mr. James Minifie asked the Prime Minister to express his views and those of the government, and the Prime Minister is quoted as having said that the Canadian government both supported and approved of United States policy and Viet Nam. I wish to ask the Prime Minister if this is an accurate report of his comments at that press conference.

Mr. Pearson: I will be glad to send the text of what I said to the hon. gentleman. I do not have that text with me, as it was taken down, but subject to correction in detail I said this government had supported the policy of the United States in Viet Nam and wished to be able to continue that support.

TANZANIA—ASSISTANCE IN AIR FORCE EQUIP- MENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to answer a question asked me last week by the member for "Reindeer"—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacEwan: Santa Claus.

An hon. Member: You have been riding reindeer.