

By and large there has been no significant change in the situation that would alter the view we formed at the end of the first 60 days, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of the Canadian contingent to support the functioning of the international commission.

Let me repeat that our attitude results from Canadian experience in the old ICSC and the Canadian concept of the functioning of a peace observer body. We are not criticizing the peace agreement. We welcomed that agreement; we regard it as a good agreement that provides as sound and honourable a basis for peace as was negotiable. If the parties will set themselves to applying it, as we hope they may yet do, it can bring lasting peace to Viet Nam. We hope that the efforts of Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Le Duc Tho to achieve a stricter observance of the agreement will be crowned with success.

We have come to the conclusion, however, that the Canadian concept of the functioning of the International Commission has not been accepted and that it would be in the interest of all concerned if we were now to withdraw. Nor do we believe that Canadian withdrawal would have any significant effect upon the prospects for peace in Viet Nam. That depends upon the parties to the peace agreement and not upon the ICCS. It is only if the parties are co-operating in a strict observance of the agreement and are willing to use the ICCS as a means of reinforcing the agreement that the commission can perform its function with any hope of success.

● (1420)

Throughout our tenure on the ICCS we have sought above all else to be objective. We have represented none of the contending parties. We have been as insistent in calling for and participating in investigations of alleged violations by the United States and the Republic of Viet Nam as we have with regard to alleged violations by the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the other South Vietnamese party. If the RVN or the United States has been at fault we have said so. If the other parties were to blame for cease-fire violations we also have said so. I assure the House that we have no need to listen mutely now or later to any charges that we have acted partially; we can be proud of our objectivity in the commission and of our attempts to see this impartiality as an integral part of commission activities.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Sharp:** I also said in my statement to the House on March 27 that Canada would be prepared to return to Viet Nam to participate in the international supervision of an election clearly held under the terms of the Paris Agreement and therefore with the concurrence and participation of the two South Vietnamese parties. It went without saying that our participation would not be necessary if a replacement were found for Canada on the ICCS. I am not convinced that there is much chance that an election will take place as provided for in the agreement, but if it should, and we would want to examine it carefully to make sure it was this kind of election, and if no replacement had been found for Canada, we would consider sympathetically a request to return temporarily to the ICCS for this purpose, in the light of the circumstances

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then prevailing and our assessment of the chances for effective supervision.

The Peace Agreement itself anticipates the replacement of the named members of the ICCS—Canada, Hungary, Indonesia and Poland, or any of them. I have also said that we would be prepared to remain on the commission until June 30 so that a replacement could be found. We have since learned that the discussions which took place recently between Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Le Duc Tho will be resumed in June. We want to give those discussions every chance of success and we would certainly wish to do nothing that would complicate them by introducing what might seem to be too short a deadline for agreeing on a replacement for Canada on the commission.

In recognition of that possible difficulty, we are prepared if the parties to the agreement so wish, to stay for a period beyond June 30 but not later than July 31. Canada's decision to withdraw is firm and definite, but the additional flexibility should give the parties adequate time to find a replacement for the Canadian delegation. Should a successor be named and be ready to take its place before July 31, we would be prepared to hand over our responsibilities at any mutually convenient earlier time. We shall, of course, continue to function as we have been doing during the remaining period of our stay on the commission.

In conclusion, I should like to pay tribute to Ambassador Gauvin, Major-General MacAlpine and all the members of the Canadian delegation now in Viet Nam and to their predecessors going back to 1954.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Sharp:** Notwithstanding great frustration and serious risks they have carried high the flag of Canada; for some it has cost them their lives. Those who now will be returning to Canada can have the satisfaction of knowing that they did all in their power to help in bringing peace to the war-weary people of Viet Nam. It was our delegation that carried the main burden of organizing the work of the commission and whatever success the commission has had can, in a large measure, be attributed to their professional competence, dedication and energy.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, as mentioned in my preceding remarks, I wish to table in both official languages a White Paper entitled "Viet Nam—Canada's Approach to Participation in the International Commission of Control and Supervision."

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe):** Mr. Speaker, the very respect of peace as a value, and the very reputation of our country within an international peace force today demand that we regretfully withdraw from Viet Nam, that we cease to be accomplices in an illusory peace, that we do not forfeit our credibility as an autonomous country.

Notwithstanding this choice, and this must be specified, we are not unconcerned about the fate awaiting the population of Viet Nam in general and more particularly civilians, a great number of whom, it would appear, are in