

[English]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SOUTH VIET NAM AND CAMBODIA—INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SUGGESTED BY U THANT—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister arising from the reported statement of the Secretary General of the United Nations today that an international conference to cope with the old war in South Viet Nam and the new war in Cambodia is an indispensable step of the utmost urgency. Is it the policy of the government to support this initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, or does the policy of the government of Canada remain the statement that the Secretary of State for External Affairs made on Friday last expressing a very considerable degree of scepticism about the utility of an international conference on this subject?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian ambassador in New York has seen the Secretary General of the United Nations on the minister's instructions, as reported by the minister. They did discuss the general question of Viet Nam and of Cambodia in particular.

I am not aware of the substance of the decisions taken by the Secretary General. I do not know if the quotation by the Leader of the Opposition is a complete summary of his proposals. I, of course, would have to study them to see whether they are the kind of initiatives that we will go along with completely or in part.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether this is a complete summary. I assumed that since the government has an ambassador at the United Nations it would be fully informed even if I were not, but since the Prime Minister has not been informed by the ambassador as to details with regard to this proposal there is obviously no point in pursuing the inquiry at this moment.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

PURPOSE OF EMPLOYMENT OF W.I.C.
WUTTUNEE

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern

Inquiries of the Ministry

Development. Is it his intention to continue to employ Mr. Wuttunee of Saskatchewan as an Indian to try to sell the federal Indian policy to the native people despite the fact that Mr. Wuttunee has been disowned by the band chiefs and Councillors of ten reserves in the Battleford area?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, in reply, I should like to say to the hon. member that Mr. Wuttunee has been hired for a period of three days, because he is a lawyer and we intended to ask him his opinion on some particular points connected with the review of the Indian Act. Perhaps Mr. Wuttunee is one of the very many Indians who support the government policy and, if his services are required in the future, we will hire him again. Anyway, we hired him only for three days, in the past, and it is not true to say that his name is on the public service payroll. In any event, for the time being, we do not foresee when we will hire him again.

[English]

Mr. Lewis: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister aware that Mr. Wuttunee is seeking to set up another Indian organization and, if so, is his department giving Mr. Wuttunee any support in that undertaking?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I know that Mr. Wuttunee, like Mr. Frank Calder, the Indian NDP member in the British Columbia Parliament, supports the policy of the government in this regard. I cannot prevent him from informing the Indians about that in order to convince them that we are choosing the right way.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary question because the minister did not answer the one I put to him.

An hon. Member: This is the answer.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, indeed, it is an answer but not to my question.

I asked the minister whether his department supported, financially or otherwise, Mr. Wuttunee's efforts with a view to developing a new organization.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, Indian associations are formed by the Indians themselves. We recognize those based on the resolutions