

I can table the text of our reply which was presented in Hanoi on March 8. This is the reply by the Prime Minister of Canada to President Ho Chi Minh and, if it is your wish, we might make that part of today's records.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Mr. McINTOSH: Could you table both letters, Mr. Martin?

Mr. MARTIN (*Essex East*): Yes. The letter of Ho Chi Minh has been tabled in the House but we can well make that part of this record, if you wish. It would be more convenient.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed to table both letters?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Mr. MARTIN (*Essex East*): Perhaps I should say we did not think it profitable at this stage to enter into a controversy with President Ho Chi Minh over the interpretation of events in Viet Nam which was contained in his letter. Rather, we availed ourselves of this opportunity to re-state the Canadian view that there could be no lasting solution of the present conflict other than through negotiations and to suggest, at the same time, that there might be a contribution which the members of the International Control Commission in Viet Nam could make to that end.

The Viet Nam question was placed before the Security Council at the beginning of February. There has been a good deal of discussion about the wisdom of this step with particular reference to its timing after the bombing of North Viet Nam had been resumed. As far as this government is concerned our position on this matter has remained unchanged. I said in the General Assembly last fall that the United Nations was the place, or one of the places, where the question of Viet Nam should certainly be discussed. We have been aware, of course, that the prospects of the United Nations playing a direct part in relation to the Viet Nam issue in present circumstances was very limited. This is not only because three of the principal parties to the Viet Nam conflict are not members of the United Nations but also because there has been a reluctance on the part of some countries to have brought before the United Nations an issue such as this which directly engages the interests of the great powers.

Nevertheless, it would have been entirely inconsistent with Canadian attitudes and policies to deny, as I say, the right of the United Nations to pronounce itself on an issue which involves the maintenance of international peace and security perhaps more than any other issue at the present time. In our view, the provisions of the Charter in this matter are clear. It is regrettable that the Security Council should not have taken the opportunity of at least recommending to the parties that they seek a peaceful solution of the Viet Nam conflict through the machinery for which they themselves have expressed a clear preference; that is to say, the machinery created in Geneva in 1954.

The inability of the Security Council to deal with this issue has reinforced the judgment which we had formed some time ago, and which was in my mind when the debate in the House of Commons took place in February, that we should look to the International Commission in Viet Nam to see whether, in the