

Viet Nam

organization is yet in place. This also raises a unique consideration for Indo-China, namely, the willingness of North Viet Nam to accept the possible involvement of international development agencies operating on its territory to administer multilateral aid. The same consideration may also apply in any bilateral context.

[Translation]

It should be noted that in view of the financial limitations of the governments in that part of the world, that is Indo-China, the donor countries may have to set up extended programs to finance local expenditures if they want to achieve an efficient reconstruction program.

Indeed, and this is readily understood, there is no administrative mechanism at this time in that part of the world that could really launch a vast program. In addition, as I have already mentioned, the requests for assistance from Canada will have to be weighed against its present role as observer and those it may have to assume eventually in Laos and even in Cambodia.

Neither the extent, nor the duration of these needs, Mr. Speaker, have been identified yet. All these factors involve difficulties which are easy to understand, and perhaps even restraints on the Canadian program of assistance for the reconstruction of this part of the world which is commonly called Indo-China. However, the need does exist and one cannot deny it. Perhaps we shall have to wait quite a long time, unhappily, before long run projects are developed. To be realistic, we must now be satisfied with short-term projects, and I guess that the government will concentrate its efforts in areas where Canada has already proved that it has experts, resources, etc. These areas could be the following ones: supplies, including drugs and auxiliary medical services,—that is what has been done in the past in that country—shelters, emergency food for displaced people, medical equipment and aid to the organization of medical services, which will surely be necessary—as well as cheap basic building materials. After this war, it will surely be necessary to erect new buildings, as and when priority needs are identified. We will have to give our support to strengthen administrative, social and educational institutions.

Finally, we could concentrate our efforts on reconstruction and long run economic development projects, as soon as they are identified, and that Canada decides that circumstances make it possible to carry them out and provide us with an efficient role to play. In view of the dislocation of the economic system, problems caused by this war and the unemployment one may expect especially in South Viet Nam, as a result of all these tragic events, labour intensive programs and projects will certainly have a particular importance and should be granted first priority.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I have tried in these few minutes to emphasize that for Canada, as for other countries, mounting an effective and distinctive contribution for reconstruction and rehabilitation in the countries of Indo-China will be neither simple nor easy. It will present serious problems from the point of view of the recipients as well as the donors. The need is there. But simply pouring in resources will clearly not suffice. A considerable amount of planning and co-ordination is necessary. For the long

[Mr. Lachance.]

term, some of the basic elements required for effective planning and implementation are still uncertain and difficult to determine. Therefore, initially I believe we should concentrate on reinforcing the present ongoing Canadian program while actively exploring the possibilities for future assistance.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Canada recognizes that Indo-China is in dire need of assistance. After all that was said today, I would add that we have at all times accepted our international duties and responsibilities in the past. I am hopeful that the people of Canada still want the government to co-operate with the Indochinese people towards the edification of a brighter future.

Because of its experience in peace-keeping, Canada must show leadership, Mr. Speaker, and that is what the world expects from us.

I can hardly share the opinion of the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) when he suggests—if I understood him correctly—that Canada has started on this venture without taking the necessary measures of carefulness, security, and without the usual necessary safeguards.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe is concerned about Canada's credibility. He should keep a count of the praise Canada has received on several occasions from the major foreign powers and international organizations, such as the United Nations, as well as from all the Secretary Generals of the United Nations and, even recently, in the report of the Secretary General on the Cyprus operations, at the General Assembly, on December 1, 1972.

I complete my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by suggesting that the government should refer to the report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence tabled in the House in June 1971 following an extensive examination of international development assistance in the white paper on foreign policy for Canadians, examined by a sub-committee that I had the honour to chair.

I hope that the government will draw its inspiration from the recommendations of the above-mentioned report which was unanimously accepted by all members of the committee in which were represented all the political parties of the House.

I hope that the government will take inspiration from these recommendations to provide all possible assistance to that area of the world, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, in order that Indo-China get over that unhuman and terrible conflict and proceed with restoration and development.

• (2050)

[English]

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the House recognize the way in which the present debate has a context larger than the involvement of a peace supervisory mission in Viet Nam for a limited period of 60 days. Indeed, that context must include Canada's potential long-term commitment in Southeast Asia. It is true that we have a small contingent there for a very limited time. But who is to say with absolute assurance that the numbers will not multiply and the days lengthen? For example, we have been in Cyprus