

Message to Hanoi by Canadian Official

the United States messages. After all, an editorial judgment or a cabinet judgment was made with regard to the content of the messages, as indicated by the Secretary of State for External Affairs a few minutes ago. As the hon. gentleman said, Canada reserved the right to add to or subtract from the messages, and it would be interesting for the House to know what those additions and subtractions were.

Time and again Canada's spokesmen advocated a non-military solution to this tragic war. They said that a purely military solution was neither desirable nor practicable. Were those words which were uttered by spokesmen in this House and outside transposed when we were acting as an emissary? Have our protests about neutrality and the need for majority decisions been found to be lacking in authenticity? In other words, has the emperor lost his clothes?

I say with great respect that Canada has found her membership on the ICC to be of great comfort and convenience over the years. Whenever Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers were questioned about this or that example of extended bombing or search and destroy operations or any other aspect of the war they were able to hide behind the cloak of neutrality and our membership on the International Control Commission. They were able to trot out little homilies about neutrality preventing our making any attempt to protest. The record is loaded with these references.

If we cannot and do not intend to bring neutrality to our membership, how do we justify our continuing to be a member of the ICC? The reason for our involvement with the ICC was to promote peace; it was not to be an errand boy bearing threats of an expanded war.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to join the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) in asking that statements of this sort which require analysis before one can discuss them properly or fully should be supplied to the various parties in reasonable time. We saw a copy of this one just as we came into the House today.

I do not envy the task the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) has undertaken, the task of defending the indefensible actions of the predecessor government. They are defended as promoting dialogue. What sort of promotion of dialogue is this? It appears that the dialogue consisted of transmitting messages from the United States threatening increased escalation of the war.

● (11:30 a.m.)

Canada's position on the International Control Commission demanded, if it was to be carried out properly and in a correct spirit, complete impartiality, a completely judicial attitude to the duties imposed upon it by the Geneva accord. Yet we find Canada occupying the position of a messenger boy for the disastrous policies of escalation undertaken by the United States of America.

[Mr. Fairweather.]

To our way of thinking this was no promotion of a dialogue.

I cannot be thought that if the United States intended to make threats known to the government of North Viet Nam it had not other methods of doing so rather than using a member of what was supposed to be an impartial tribunal, the International Joint Commission, to do that very thing. I feel deep regret that Canada should have allowed itself to give evidence of subservience to the disastrous actions and purposes of the United States in Viet Nam.

I say nothing further except to add that I join with the hon. member for Fundy-Royal in urging that this whole matter be referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence so that all the documents can be produced and those who took part in this unhappy affair can tell the committee exactly what happened. I do not think that this House or the people of Canada will be satisfied until this has been done and the matter thoroughly and intensively investigated.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, the statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) is a logical sequence of previous events and a justification of Canada's role as an active member of the International Control Commission.

Mr. Speaker, from the moment when Canada accepted to serve as a channel to transmit communications between two parties involved, such as North Viet Nam and the United States, it accepted to change the nature of its role within the International Control Commission, since it accepted to become involved, whereas its initial position in this Commission was neutral.

Mr. Speaker, this shows how little information is conveyed to us. What we do know, we have learned from the *New York Times*. We cannot get replies from the government, which shows that the role Canada accepted to play calls for some justification.

The minister says that our commissioner has unknowingly relayed United States war messages. This is a serious thing indeed and I am in agreement with the previous speakers in asking the government to allow the former Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, as well as the former Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Hon. Paul Martin, to appear before the External Affairs and National Defence Committee to clarify this situation.

In accepting to act as an intermediary for relaying messages between Indochina and the United States, Canada also accepted to become involved and to screen certain messages. I do not really understand how the Canadian commissioner could have been asked to transmit military messages. Was such a step truly in the interests of peace? Our membership in the International Control Commission, to be efficient and influential, should have consisted in ensuring peace in that part of the world.

Today, the Secretary of State for External Affairs is trying once again, though not very successfully, to justify