

Viet Nam

observers at the various sites there is a requirement for 116 support personnel to provide the necessary service for the functioning of the contingent.

When these figures are broken down it means that we will have 62 military and External Affairs Canadian personnel functioning on headquarters' staff, 112 carrying out direct supervisory and observation duties and 116 providing operational support. This totals 290 personnel, which is the Canadian commitment to the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

As I have advised the House on earlier occasions, a requirement of the protocol is that our total contingent of 290 personnel should be in Saigon between 15 and 30 days after the cease-fire. We are now planning as I have indicated, but subject to review of circumstances, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) has also stated, to send the remainder of the Canadian contingent from Montreal on February 10, which means that they will be arriving in Viet Nam on the sixteenth day following the cease-fire.

There has been, understandably, some expression of concern about the cost to Canada of participating in the International Commission. There have been questions in the House, some of which have been answered by my parliamentary secretary. Understandably, some members have wondered whether our expenditures in Viet Nam would bring about reduced activity on some of our bases in Canada. It must be evident that many of our expenditures are ones which we would be incurring in any event and are already within our budget. For example, the *Terra Nova* would have been on a training mission, the Hercules aircraft would have been flying supplies, and certainly all of the personnel would have been receiving their regular pay and allowances whether they were in Viet Nam or in Canada. However, we will be paying personnel in Viet Nam a foreign service allowance of \$150 per month for single personnel and up to \$180 per month for married personnel. The total cost of these foreign service allowances will amount to under \$50,000 per month.

I can assure hon. members that our participation in the International Commission will not have a significant effect upon other operations in Canada. More important to me than any dollar cost that might be involved is the opportunity for Canadians to play some part in the role in which we as a nation have become recognized as world leaders.

My conversations with Canadian personnel leaving for Viet Nam revealed that they were proud to be representing Canada as members of the International Commission. I believe that most Canadians share that pride and welcome this opportunity for Canada to serve the cause of peace. In saying that, Mr. Speaker, I am not unaware of the difficulties, I might almost say the apparently insurmountable difficulties that face us as part of the International Commission.

I have said before on other occasions that some decisions that we make are decisions of the mind, they are logical and reasoned decisions, and there are other decisions which are decisions of the heart. It would be easy for us to find logical and sensible reasons to stay away from Viet Nam but it would be, I believe, inconsistent with

[Mr. Richardson.]

the prospects which Canada holds for the world for Canadians to refuse to at least try to help the cause of peace in this or in any other part of the world.

• (1740)

I might say, in conclusion, that my conviction about our decision—and it was a serious decision—to send our Canadian forces to Viet Nam as part of the new International Commission is well expressed in the words from a play which some of you may remember; it was a musical called "The King and I". The words which the king applied to himself might also be applied to a country, particularly to our country, in the present circumstances. His words were:

This is a man who thinks with his heart
A man who is not always wise,
This is a man who stumbles and falls,

But this is a man who tries.

Only time can tell if our mission will be successful, but I am certain, as I stated at the beginning of these remarks, that it is characteristic of the Canadian people that our military forces should leave Canada, not to fight but to help prevent fighting. When we are asked to try to help maintain peace, I am certain there are very few Canadians who would say that we should not, at least, try.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather).

Mr. Sharp: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the hon. gentleman would grant me a moment, because of the urgency of the matter and its interest to all members of the House, to say that the name of Mr. Lloyd Oppel whose whereabouts we had been concerned about is now on the prisoners' list provided by North Viet Nam, and we are trying to secure his early release.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, first of all may I endorse the tributes paid by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) and the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) to the armed forces and to the officers of the Department of External Affairs who are engaged in what we have all come to know as a difficult operation. I think that all hon. members appreciate the fact that it is because we share the gratification expressed by the two ministers that we want to make as certain as debate and discussion can that this special Canadian mission in Viet Nam is a productive and useful one.

Canada will have an opportunity to validate our involvement in Viet Nam at the time of the convening of the international conference under the provisions of article 19 of the agreement. The conference is to be held before the end of February. It has many more chances of success than did the one in Geneva in 1954. I suggest three reasons for optimism in this regard. Firstly, the Secretary General of the United Nations is to be a participant and this means that for the first time the United Nations will have a role in the tragedy which is Viet Nam. This is of