

*Viet Nam*

Mr. Speaker, the stand in the House must clearly indicate that any decision on the part of Canada regarding its participation as well as the terms of its participation in the international commission in Viet Nam beyond the initial period of 60 days should not take effect unless it is ratified by a resolution passed in this House.

Mr. Speaker, our long-term image at the world level depends on our vigilance and solidarity and not on precipitated and unilateral decisions.

It is in that spirit of wisdom and solidarity, solidarity within Parliament, solidarity within the Canadian population that we should eventually reconsider our co-operation to the social and economic rebuilding of Viet Nam so that this peace we are all hoping for will be lasting and healing.

[English]

There must be reconstruction. There must be an international effort to rebuild that which has been destroyed and replant those areas which have been defoliated. Canada's commitment to accept a field supervisory role in Viet Nam must, at the very least, be matched by a commitment to aid in resolving the social and economic problems which all Viet Nam now faces. There is a tradition in Canada with regard to peace. It is a proud tradition. Surely, in the name of that tradition, we have the right to expect our government to be competent in carrying out the tasks of peace.

• (1620)

In 1954, after difficulties under the United Nations Supervisory Commission for Korea, and upon our embarking on our role in Viet Nam, the Department of External Affairs in a July 28 release said:

The International Supervisory Commission should be able to function more effectively than the United Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea which, because of equal communist and non-communist representation, very often had effective action blocked.

We knew in 1954 what the mistakes in Korea had been and yet we allowed ourselves to commit them once more. Sir, we know today what the mistakes of 1954 were. While it may be the intention of the minister and the government to continue making those same mistakes, that is not what parliament or the people have the right to expect.

**Mr. Sharp:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wagner:** Mr. Speaker, there is little that our troops are doing in Viet Nam today, little that any war correspondent could not do.

**Mr. Sharp:** Downgrade them; that's the way!

**Mr. Wagner:** It is because of the situation of our troops, and the need for positive steps on the part of the government in the interest of a meaningful peace, that the decision as to what transpires before the end of the 60 day period and beyond must not be made by the government alone. It must and should be made by the parliament and the people of Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Mr. Wagner.]

**Mr. Wagner:** I therefore invite all my colleagues in this House to join with me in affirming parliament's right to determine the nature and the quality of our activities in Viet Nam. I invite my colleagues to establish clearly the precise role we can and must play in future negotiations and activities with reference to Viet Nam.

I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that in matters external to our normal domestic scene there is often a tendency, out of confusion or a desire not to muddy the waters, to put trust in the government and not challenge its basic assumptions or positions. Sir, parliament is more than a forum for domestic problems. It is the assembly through which Canadians can express their views as citizens of the world.

Parliament has clear and direct rights which must be respected. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in all parties not to abdicate those rights to any government or to any minister. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of moving, seconded by the hon. member for Scarborough East (Mr. Stackhouse):

That the motion be amended by adding thereto, next after the words "Viet-Nam cease-fire", the following:

"and stipulates that a decision by Government of Canada concerning continuing participation and the conditions for such participation in the said International Commission beyond the initial period of 60 days shall not be effected unless and until it is affirmed by a Resolution of this House."

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, may I say immediately that I have asked my colleagues behind me to look at the amendment. It seems to me that this is a basic proposition which we had urged earlier about parliament having to make the decisions. I will say a word or two in a moment about the initial decision made by the government without coming to parliament, which may not have been avoidable, but I do not think there is any reason why, beyond the 60 days, that decision has to be taken by government without consulting parliament.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lewis:** I want to emphasize, and I say it kindly to the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner), that in these situations it is easy to carp, and to say what might have been in the agreements. But Canada did not write the agreements, and I do not think any member of this House, whether in the government or outside it, can be held to blame for that.

There may have been some argument on the part of the Department of External Affairs that, in order to meet the requirements of the Paris Agreements, personnel had to be in Viet Nam last Saturday. However, I agree fully with the statement made by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe that that first step, having been taken by the government under circumstances which it believed forced it to take that step, from now on the government ought to consult parliament on any further step it may take with regard to this role.

What I specifically asked my colleagues behind me, since I was rising to my feet immediately after the amendment was moved—I hope I will have the answer before my remarks are finished—was whether the hon. member's amendment might not be improved by adding "or withdrawal" to it.