

*Viet Nam War*

on behalf of the Leader of the Official Opposition, on behalf of all my colleagues, I am anxious to support the resolution before us. We are aware of the importance of the war in Viet Nam, in Indochina. Human and ecological damages inflicted by air raids are terrifying. To date, there have been over six million casualties of all kinds: killed, wounded, refugees or homeless. This number is said to include at least, some four and half million civilians.

Studies have established that from 1968 to 1972 more tons of bombs have been dropped over Viet Nam than during the Second World War and the Korean War together, four million tons of bombs or the equivalent, it is said, of an atom bomb every five days. Immense areas have been sprinkled with bombs, rockets and mines, to such an extent that their capacity to sustain a population is jeopardized. So the economic and social structures have disintegrated in a great many villages.

With such facts and many others there is reason to worry and to publicly intervene on behalf of the whole population. Fundamentally, the Viet Nam war is raising a moral issue for all men. How can we as human beings go peacefully to sleep every night with a clear conscience while so many of our brothers have to suffer the pangs of war? How can we be proud of ourselves if we fail to attempt to put an end to this holocaust probably the greatest in the world history?

• (1420)

[English]

There can be no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that Canada would gain little from a position adopted by this parliament that tended in a disproportionate way to side with one or the other sides of the conflict. My party is concurring in the motion because we want to side with humanity.

While there may be those in this House who relish any opportunity to attack our neighbours to the south—

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

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Wagner:** —that is not a pastime in which we should indulge, and it is not a pastime that is either productive or necessary.

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

**Mr. Wagner:** One thing, Mr. Speaker, must be clear. There is never a good side in war for the civilians affected by the conflict. Some wars may be necessary, some may even be just; but for the innocent civilian, war means inhuman suffering and pain. It means incalculable loss.

With regard to Viet Nam I prefer to avoid making distinctions between the North Vietnamese civilians suffering under heavy bombings and the South Vietnamese civilians being victimized by terrorism of the worst order. Vietnamese on both sides of the demilitarized zone have suffered for too long. Their crops have gone unharvested; children have gone without education: indeed, their education has been that of war and suffering for too long. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we concur in the motion. We concur because we believe that both sides have the

[Mr. Wagner.]

capacity to bring about a just peace and, indeed, a lasting one.

We happen to believe that as friends of the United States we have a duty to make our humanitarian concerns known and understood as clearly as possible. No friendship, even between two countries, can thrive if one of the partners in that friendship is anything less than honest about those things that are important to its people.

We believe, as well, as a nation that began under the stewardship of my colleagues, the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) and the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton), the type of trade partnership with members of the communist bloc from which both sides have benefited, that we can articulate to the communist bloc our desire that it bring its full weight to bear so that the suffering in Indo-China can come to an end.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that all Canadians desire the suffering in Indo-China to halt. I believe it is in Canada's national and quite selfish interest for long drawn-out wars anywhere in the world to be ended quickly and with no more bloodshed. It is in that frame of mind, and with the desire to have parliament move on to the pressing and important domestic problems that threaten the quality of life of Canadians from coast to coast, that I express my party's support for this motion.

[Translation]

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, having in mind the solidarity of our oppressed fellow human beings and a true humanitarian feeling, and not because of any anti-Americanism, we second the motion which does provide that all parties to the conflict refrain from military operations which are likely to be prejudicial to the actual and complete success of the negotiations now taking place.

Mr. Speaker, this position taken by our party is an answer to an invitation which was given to men two thousand years ago and which said: "Peace to men of good will".

• (1430)

[English]

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to express my congratulations to the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) for his impressive maiden speech in this House and to say that we in this party welcome him as a colleague in the House.

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

**Mr. Brewin:** Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party will support the motion moved by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp). We do so, not because we would have drafted a resolution in the same language or indeed in the same tone; we feel so passionately about the immense tragedy of the war in Viet Nam and its barbarities that we would like the language to be more emphatic. However, we think it important that the people of Canada through their elected representatives should speak as far as possible with one voice on this matter which is affecting the conscience of the world. We do not propose to move any amendments to the resolution.