

the Prime Minister and the obligation of the Commission to carry out its duties under the Geneva Protocol of 1962. Unfortunately, we have not received the degree of co-operation required for success. The Commission has to act by majority vote or, in certain circumstances, by unanimous vote.

The Prime Minister of Laos has proposed that, in view of the gravity of the situation, the members of the 1962 Conference on Laos should hold consultations as provided by Article 4 of the Geneva Protocol. The Government of France has now indicated its support for this proposal in notes to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference, Britain and the Soviet Union. It seems to me that consultations under the Protocol could have a salutary effect on the present crisis, and I have already instructed our Commissioner in Vientiane to let it be known that Canada would be willing to take part in such consultations arranged as a result of the proposal made by the Prime Minister of Laos. It is of course, for the members of the Geneva Conference to decide whether any consultations which are agreed upon should take place with all the formalities of an international conference or, perhaps preferably, in some less formal way.

I recognize that this has not been an encouraging picture of the state of affairs in Indochina, an area where Canada has, for ten years now, at great expense to our people, sought, along with India and Poland and other countries, to bring about peaceful conditions. The key seems to lie in Vietnam, and if the Communists would renounce armed subversion a great step forward would have been taken toward restoring peace and stability to the area. Political solutions seem hardly possible for Vietnam as long as the present militant Communist interference in South Vietnam continues.

I am afraid that I have taken too long, but really I do not apologize because these are matters on which Parliament has a right to hear from me. I recognize that time has prevented me from dealing with many other questions, such as external aid, international economic development, desirable changes in the United Nations, and the Organization of American States. These and other questions will undoubtedly be covered in our discussions here and in the External Affairs Committee when my estimates are being considered.

An Interdependent World

The wide area covered by what I have had to say points up the fact that our world is interdependent. When I think of the questions with which I have to deal I cannot help but go back to my early days in this House 28 years ago, when there was little discussion of foreign affairs and when it was regarded almost as presumptuous even to put a question having to do with the foreign affairs of the nation. All that is changed because our world is changed, and with this change has come perhaps a heavier responsibility for Parliament than it really is. Canada cannot escape its responsibilities in matters which a few years ago were not regarded as our concern. We are drawn into the maelstrom of a disturbed world. We are not one of the great powers, but self respect and international obligation present us with a duty and an opportunity. Although we are not the main architects of the world's destiny, I believe we will not shirk our responsibilities in seeking to establish better conditions for peace among the nations.