

Finally, although passing reference is made in the agreement to Cambodia and Laos, no precise arrangements are envisaged for broadening the cease-fire and settlement to these two countries. There seems to be no intention of having them participate in the International Conference. We can only hope that, in the weeks ahead, the effects of a cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam will be extended to these two countries, so that the fighting will stop throughout Indochina. Indeed, it is disappointing that Asian involvement in the arrangements as a whole is so slight. The omission of Japan and the ASEAN group of countries, except for Indonesia, is particularly conspicuous.

Some of these shortcomings in the arrangement are now built in. Others could be altered at the International Conference. Still others could be corrected or alleviated in their effects if the Parties and our associates in the Commission show enough goodwill and enough determination to make the Commission work and be effective. We shall be watching and working for that.

The comments I have made are not intended as the sort of facile criticism that those who were not involved in hammering out the agreement can always level at those who were. Obviously, this was an extremely difficult negotiation. It is a wonder there was any agreement at all. I am not suggesting that the circumstances could have permitted a better arrangement. What I am trying to do is establish, from the point of view of a conscientious member of the ICCS, the magnitude of the task given to us and the apparent poverty of the arrangements available to carry it out. This is not an effort to establish some sort of fancied position of moral superiority. It is an attempt to explain why we cannot undertake an open-ended commitment: to lay before the House and the Canadian people the sorts of problems that can be foreseen and that led us to warn we might have to withdraw.

We will do what we can to alleviate the effect of these shortcomings by our own efforts, by the manner in which we approach the Commission's operations and our participation in them. I have referred, for example, to the provision for unanimity. We are determined not to be frustrated by it. One way we will do this is by making the Commission and all its activities and proceedings as open and public as possible. We shall consider ourselves free to communicate our views, and the difference between our views and those of other delegations, to whatever person or organization we think fit, or to the public and the press. This applies to the rule of unanimity or any other provision of the cease-fire that might reduce us to inactivity or ineffectiveness.

For sixty days, we are going to put everything to the test: the viability and effectiveness of the international supervisory arrangements themselves, the will and determination of the Parties and of our Commission colleagues to make the agreements and the Commission work, indeed ourselves and our own ability to make the commission work. For sixty days, we shall do all we possibly can to make this Commission work and work effectively. By the end of the sixty days, Canada will form its own judgment of that experience and of prospects for the future. On the basis of that judgment, Canada will reach its own decision on continued participation for a further period. I want to say candidly now that in some important respects, the international observer arrangements are unpromising. I will not prejudice the Government's decision either way. But no one should assume continued Canadian participation will be forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the hundreds of Canadian men and women, civilian and military, who have served