

We shall 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 shall do this is by making the commission and 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 60 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 and work effectively. By the end of the 60 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 prejudge the Government's decision either way, but no one should assume as a matter of course that continued Canadian participation will be forthcoming.

Before concluding these remarks, 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 in commissions in the past. I say this because, although I have said on a number of occasions that the International Control Commission was reduced to a farce, it was not because of lack of effort on the part of the Canadians who served on that commission. It was just in the nature of the arrangements that had been made, and that we are trying to correct on this occasion.

I should like to pay tribute to the men and women who are now in Vietnam to begin work in the new commission, and to those who are preparing to go there. They went there and they are now going, not because their country has national interests of its own to pursue there but because Canada recognizes it has a responsibility to contribute to peace in the world if it can do so effectively. I know of no better way of contributing to Canada's national interest than to end the war in Vietnam, or to help end the war in Vietnam.

The task is difficult: it can also be dangerous. Some Canadians have lost their lives trying to accomplish it. Others may yet do so. We bear a heavy responsibility to them; it is to ensure that their dedication and courage serve to contribute effectively to the maintenance of peace. We must do all we can to ensure their role is effective, and we must withdraw them if, despite their best efforts, their role seems doomed to ineffectiveness.

That is the purpose of the Government's policy and of its recent decision. I know it is also the purpose of all Canadians and of this House which represents them.