

184. With these broad objectives, the Public Relations Work of the Commission has been done with considerable success. The Commission has discouraged news about differences amongst, and complaints of, the Parties. It has directed its efforts not so much to giving or securing publicity, but to diminishing chances of hasty and unwarranted criticism which might hinder progress of the implementation of the Geneva Agreement. All releases emanating from the Commission are approved unanimously. Such releases are factual and are made as comprehensive as possible.

Possible
Reper-
cussion
if
settled
be del
Internal
Publicity

185. There are no organised normal press and publicity facilities in Laos. The Government of Laos publish a daily French bulletin (500 copies) and a bi-weekly Laotian language bulletin (350 copies), both mimeographed. There is also the Lao National Radio with about 3,000 listeners. But diffusion of news through these channels is limited. Therefore, the importance of personal contacts with Members of the Government, the Parties to the Agreement and the public at all levels, cannot be over-emphasised. (b)

Relevant
Articles
Geneva
Agreement

186. The International Commission, at its meeting with the Joint Commission on 29th September, 1954, called upon the Parties to refrain from using words or expressions on the radio or in the press, which may widen the rift between them. This has, in fact, been emphasised time after time, formally and informally, with some good effect. Recently, the Commission requested the two Parties to publicise, throughout the territory of Laos, Articles 15 and 17 of the Agreement and the portion of the Declaration of the Royal Government of Laos made at Geneva with reference to Article 3 of the Final Declaration concerning democratic freedoms.

Human
rights
meeting
pro-
posed
issue

187. The only News Agency, which has a resident correspondent in Laos, is the Agence France Presse. In the interest of accuracy and to ensure widest diffusion for its press releases, the Commission also decided to transmit them to the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, for release to the World Press. Copies are made available to the Canadian and Polish Embassies in New Delhi for onward transmission to their countries. By arrangement with the respective International Commissions, messages are also simultaneously released at Hanoi, Phnom Penh and Saigon.

External
Publicity

188. Visiting journalists, whose number recently has been on the increase, have been given a fair and objective picture of the activities of the Commission and the problems it is facing. It may be added that the leaders of the three Delegations have always agreed upon unanimous views on vital issues before meeting press correspondents. Their unanimity of approach, while giving interviews to the journalists, has had a wholesome effect on news-reporting in the World Press.

has a
method
within
Joint
Commission

189. Co-ordination of the working methods and relations among the Public Relations Officers of the three Commissions in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos were discussed at a Conference held in Hanoi in November, 1954 and several useful steps were agreed to. These include:-

Co-ordinat
tion

work of the Commission.