

Mr. Chairman,

The first words of any representative of Canada to an international conference on the subject of Viet-Nam must be to congratulate the authors of the Agreement signed in this same building a month ago. All the parties deserve the gratitude not only of their own peoples but of all those states which have come to regard the war in Viet-Nam as affecting their own national aspirations and interests. My government is firmly of the opinion that the Agreement signed here last month represents a magnificent and hard-earned opportunity which must not be lost. This agreement, indeed, doesn't solve all the problems, neither does it meet all of our hopes; but its very existence is far more desirable than the absurdity of the armed conflict itself.

Although Canada's agreement to participate in the International Commission of Control and Supervision was conditional, the Canadian Delegation in Saigon has taken a leading part in getting not only the International Commission of Control and Supervision teams in place as required by the agreement, but also in facilitating the other organizations established under it to begin to exercise their functions. The Canadian Delegation from the beginning has been motivated by a desire to make the agreement work if this was at all possible. This will continue to be our attitude in Vietnam for as long as we are there. It will also be the attitude of the Canadian Delegation here in Paris. I am sure that all other delegations at this conference are equally conscious of the importance of the part this conference has to play in transforming the present precarious ceasefire into a lasting peace in which the South Vietnamese people and only the South Vietnamese people will determine their future. Even though the Lao and Khmer peoples are not represented at this conference, their futures too are bound up in peace in Vietnam. They too are entitled to the right to determine their own futures for themselves without any foreign intervention.

The fact that there is yet another international conference being held on Vietnam is in some respects sad inasmuch as it reflects on the rights of the Indochinese peoples to determine their own futures for themselves. But the fact remains that the struggle in Indochina has become an international struggle involving not only the nations of that peninsula but countries far removed from it. From the point of view of my government, the object of the Paris Agreement is not to perpetuate an international presence in Vietnam but to eliminate it and on conditions that will ensure again a fresh internationalization. This conference should be able to provide for some of those conditions.

Canada has had the educative experience of having served nineteen years on the international commissions in Indochina and from that experience we have come to a number of conclusions. If these conclusions seem to imply criticism of the existing agreement on Vietnam, I hasten to assure you that this is not my intention. My primary purpose is to prevent my country from being once more involved in an intractable situation and an open-ended commitment. At the same time we are deeply conscious that Canada has a history of concern for and participation in international peacekeeping and is very jealous of its reputation in this area.

Canada sees itself, in its membership in the International Commission of Control and Supervision, not as the spokesman of any one