

the Chief of the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" Delegation said that his declaration referred to all Volunteers of Vietnam who had fought in Laos.

81. In the circumstances the Commission feels that for the time being the question of the special convention is not a live issue.

CHAPTER: V

REMOVING AND NEUTRALISING MINES

82. Article 3 of the Geneva Agreement stipulated that all operations and movement entailed by the cessation of hostilities and regrouping must proceed in a safe and orderly fashion. In this respect, it particularly provided, in Article 3(a), that within a number of days to be determined by the Joint Commission, each Party should be responsible for removing and neutralising mines, booby traps, explosives and any other dangerous substance placed by it. In the event of its being impossible to complete the work of removal and neutralisation in time, the Party concerned was required to mark the spots by placing visible signs there.

83. A further agreement was signed between the two Parties at Khang Khay on 29th August, 1954 that all such mines and booby traps on the routes of withdrawal and important lines of communication and vicinity of populated areas would be removed, and in case such removal was impossible, they would be fenced in. This agreement was also to apply within the Provisional Assembly Areas.

84. The removal and neutralising of mines and booby traps for ensuring the safety and regrouping of forces in an orderly fashion did not raise any problem. Generally speaking, the forces of the two Parties were not in close contact with each other and did not have to move to their regrouping zone through areas held by the other Party. It was reported, in fact, that the mines and booby traps were systematically laid only in a few places and these were properly marked and were generally within a barbed wire enclosure. Some mines and booby traps were said to have been laid at odd places as "nuisance minefields", of which neither side had maintained charts, but these were in jungles round about the hide-outs of irregular troops.

85. Both the Parties gave an assurance on 29/30th September, 1954 that the agreement had been fully implemented. The International Commission records with pleasure that throughout the move of the forces to the regrouping areas and during their withdrawal that followed, there was no complaint or report of any casualty due to mines or booby traps.

88. The Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" side, on the other hand, submitted on 17th August, 1954, a project regarding the procedure for the exchange of prisoners of war and civilian internees. The following were the salient features:

Not a live issue

Khang Khay Agreement

Removal Operations

Implementation