

11. The Parties met at Vientiane after some initial delay at the end of October 1955, but it soon became apparent that the difficulties encountered at Rangoon were of a fundamental nature and could not be resolved. The Pathet Lao stated that they could not take part in the 1955 elections unless solution to the various problems raised by them had been found while the Royal Government maintained that they could not meet all the Pathet Lao demands and insisted on the restoration of the Royal Administration in the two northern provinces before elections. As the Parties could not agree on a common basis for further discussion, the negotiations were discontinued.

12. The Royal Government held "general elections" on 25 December 1955. The Pathet Lao did not participate in them. The Commission was not asked to play any part in the elections and it did not adopt any official attitude towards them. During the months of December 1955/January 1956, the Commission received several letters from both the Parties concerning the course of political negotiations so far held, as also the Pathet Lao's complaint that the elections held were illegal and invalid. At the request of both the Parties, the Commission forwarded these letters on 25 November 1955 to the Co-Chairmen. Limited comments on the attitude of the three Delegations on the question of elections were later made available to the Co-Chairmen. The Canadian Delegation held the view that these were not contrary to the Geneva Agreement and that the Royal Laotian Government had tried their utmost to reach a political settlement with the Pathet Lao beforehand and were bound by their own Constitution to hold elections some time in 1955. The Polish Delegation considered that the elections were not held in conformity with the Geneva Agreement, and that the Commission had taken no part in them and had made no comments. The Indian Delegation took the view that the Royal Laotian Government had freedom to hold elections whenever they wished under their own law, but as no political settlement had been reached with the Pathet Lao and as they did not participate in the elections, these elections were not of the type contemplated in the Geneva Agreement.

13. All these developments indicated that the situation was far from satisfactory and that the tension between the Parties was mounting. All the Delegations were aware of the situation but differed considerably as to the best course of action to be followed in the circumstances. As early as 14 December 1955, the Canadian Delegation had moved a resolution entitled "Restoration of the Royal Administration of the two provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua", taking the view that such a resolution was of primary importance and would help stabilise the situation. The Polish Delegation, however, was of the opinion that the primary concern of the Commission was the maintenance of the cessation of hostilities and that in so far as the political problem had been referred to the Co-Chairmen by the Parties themselves, the Commission should desist from any action until the views of the Co-Chairmen were known. As a result of intense discussion, the Chairman tabled an alternative draft (Annexure 3) which was eventually adopted on 7 January, 1956 with Canadian and Indian support. The final resolution recommended re-establishment without delay of the Royal Administration in the northern provinces concurrently with the necessary measures of integration of the Pathet Lao without discrimination and requested the Parties to open negotiations to achieve these ends, and thus, a