

We believe that the provision for the sort of infrastructure and the payment for the ordinary expenses of the commission could have been met elsewhere. I understand the argument that is used in order to justify a token contribution from each of the members of the supervisory commission is that each of us under the circumstances would support economy in the expenses of the commission. This was the argument that was put to me. I said it was not one I could defend very well to the taxpayers of Canada, who would, in any event, be paying the salaries and allowances of the personnel. I thought there were surely more effective ways of ensuring economy. However, as I say, the 2 per cent is very small and I would not for that reason consider that Canada should withdraw.

Then, too, we have been concerned that the task of the international observers be realistic and realizable. Yet the agreement provides that the commission shall supervise and control the entry into South Vietnam of military personnel and all military equipment. This seems to specify a task which is clearly beyond the means of an international commission of this size or, indeed, of any likely size.

Finally, although passing reference is made in the agreement to Cambodia and Laos, no precise arrangements are envisaged for broadening the cease-fire and settlement to these two countries. There seems to be no intention of having them participate in the international conference. We can only hope that, in the weeks ahead, the effects of a cessation of hostilities in Vietnam will be extended to these two countries, so that the fighting will stop throughout Indochina. Indeed, it is disappointing that Asian involvement in the arrangements as a whole is so slight. The omission of Japan and the ASEAN group of countries, except for Indonesia, is particularly conspicuous.

Some of these shortcomings in the arrangement are now built in. Others could be altered at the international conference. Still others could be corrected or alleviated in their effects if the parties and our associates in the commission show enough goodwill and enough determination to make the commission work and be effective. We shall be watching and working for that. As I said at the outset, we are not taking a passive or a reluctant attitude; we want to make the commission work.

The comments I have made are not intended as the sort of facile criticism that those who were not involved in hammering out the agreement can always level at those who were. Obviously, this was an extremely difficult negotiation. It is a wonder there was any agreement at all. I am not suggesting that the circumstances could have permitted a better arrangement. What I am trying to do is establish, from the point of view of a conscientious member of the International Commission of Control and Supervision, the magnitude of the task given to us and the apparent poverty of the arrangements available to carry it out. This is not an effort to establish some sort of fancied position of moral superiority. It is an attempt to explain why we cannot undertake an open-ended commitment at this time, to lay before the House and the Canadian people the sorts of problems that can be foreseen and that led us to warn we might have to withdraw.