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Canada stands watch over Vietnam truce

The first group of Canadian civilian and military personnel to serve with the new International Supervisory Commission in Vietnam arrived in Saigon on January 29.

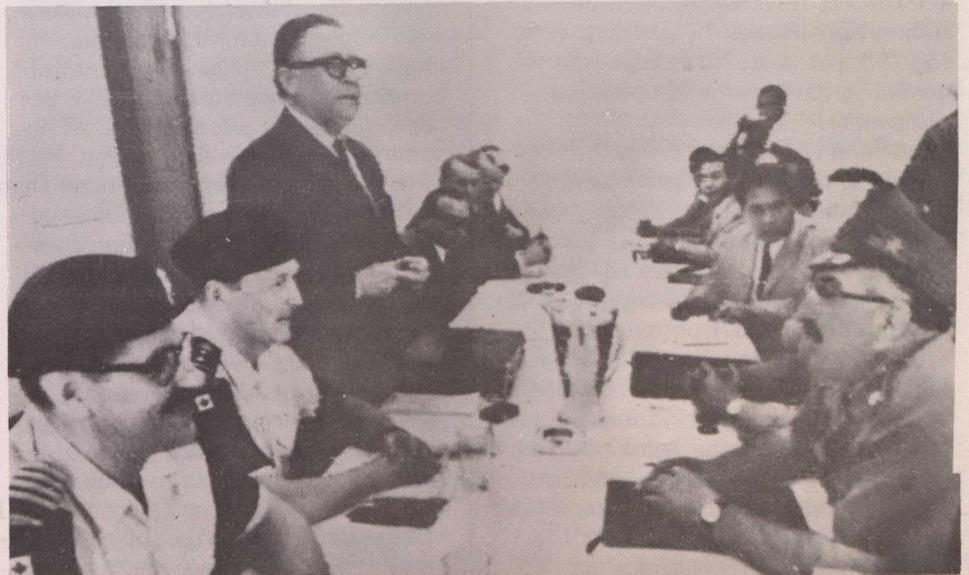
Before they left Canada on January 27, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, stated that a diplomatic note had been sent to representatives of the four parties who had signed the ceasefire agreement in Paris, informing them of Canada's willingness to serve with Hungary, Indonesia and Poland on the Commission but making clear that Canada's participation beyond 60 days would depend on the extent to which Canada's conditions for full acceptance of membership, previously communicated to the parties to the agreements, were fulfilled during the initial period.

Mr. Sharp said that, during this time, the Canadian delegation would cooperate fully with all other parties and accept all the responsibilities of a Commission member. Noting that the Commission would face many serious difficulties during the first few weeks,

he emphasized the nature of the role the Commission would be expected to perform, which, he said, would be limited to that of an observer and reporter of the truce and ceasefire arrangements that had been agreed to. The Commission has no mandate to act in any way to constrain physically any party to abide by any of the terms of the ceasefire agreement, though it could act in a mediatory role if requested and if the Commission considered it useful.

The Canadian delegation, composed of members of the Armed Forces and of the Department of External Affairs, is headed by Mr. Michel Gauvin, Canadian Ambassador to Greece, who served as an adviser to the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Indochina in 1955 and as Canadian Chargé d'Affaires in the Congo during the United Nations peacekeeping operations in that country. Mr. Gauvin's senior political adviser is Mr. V.G. Turner, who has also served as an adviser to the ICSC in Indochina.

The Canadian Commissioner to the existing Commission, Mr. R.D. Jackson, will continue to serve in that capacity for the initial 60 days of the new Commission.



Michel Gauvin, chief Canadian delegate, addresses first session of the ICCS in Saigon.

Wide World photo