

We are of the opinion that the commission in Cambodia has completed its task and that it should be dissolved. We continue in our attempts to persuade the Indian and Polish delegations to agree to dissolution.

In Laos, the tense military and political situation has made the continued existence of the commission desirable. However, on November 18 the two parties in Laos signed agreements providing for the integration of the dissident Pathet Lao movement. Although we hope this development will produce a reduction and eventual elimination of our commitments, it appears that the commission in Laos will have certain responsibilities for supervising this integration and it is not too clear at this stage what reductions will be possible in the near future. It is certainly our expectation that our commitments in Laos will be reduced to the point where they are consistent with any job remaining to be done.

The major continuing jobs of the commission in Vietnam are the supervision and control of military personnel and equipment entering and leaving the two parts of the country, which have not yet been unified, and the supervision of the demilitarized area between the two zones. These functions at present involve seventeen commission teams and it has therefore been difficult to effect any personnel economies. In addition, during the past year the commission has undertaken a number of investigations requiring deployment of special mobile teams, and this has necessitated the presence of additional personnel. However, as in the rest of the Indochina area, we have been pressing for reductions and we hope that some military personnel will be released in December. We are also examining ways of reducing the Vietnam commission to a size which we consider more consistent with the functions which we think it can usefully perform.

Political equilibrium seems to have been generally achieved in the area. In Vietnam and Laos, we consider that the commissions still have a useful role to perform in maintaining peace and stability. Therefore, although the provision of more than 160 military and civilian personnel for the three commissions continues to place a strain on the resources of both the Department of National Defence and the Department of External Affairs, we believe that our participation has made a vital contribution to the maintenance of the armistice agreements in Laos and Vietnam. However, we are anxious to eliminate this burden as soon as possible, and we plan to continue our efforts to effect reductions.

The United Kingdom, France, the U.S.S.R. and the Peoples' Republic of China have been contributing to the upkeep of the three commissions. During the past year the advance payment of \$100,000 (U.S.) which Canada contributed to the common pool until the Geneva conference members could arrange to make regular contributions, was repaid. Until now, however, we have not recovered any of the expenditures we have incurred which are to be charged to the common pool. Claims for the recoverable expenditures to June 30, 1957, totalling \$1,307,061.02 for Canada, have been submitted to the international secretariat of the Vietnam commission. We shall continue to press for the repayment of these expenditures, but there has been some difficulty in co-ordinating the accounting of the commissions and the payment of accounts.

#### *Communications*

The rapid expansion of our work since the war has been accompanied—one might almost say made possible—by the steady and very considerable increase in our communications system. Changes in the method of computing the number of messages despatched between our growing centres of activity, make it impossible for me to give you figures on this expansion. We have worked hard to improve and speed up our communications in order to knit together more closely and effectively the increased extent of our foreign service activity.