

*External Affairs*

as they do between northern Viet Nam and Thailand. These northern areas have been the scene of numerous incidents involving both the communist Pathet Lao forces on the one hand and the royal Laotian forces on the other, and for which the former must bear the main share of responsibility.

Unfortunately, the commission's teams have not always been able to investigate these incidents as promptly or as thoroughly as was desirable. There is always a lack of communication facilities in that part of the country, and I am bound to say there has been no lack of communist obstruction. It is to be hoped that this state of affairs, which has caused us real anxiety on the commission, will be remedied. On the whole, however, the military provisions of the Laotian agreement have been fairly satisfactorily carried out, and I think the presence in that country at this time of an international commission has done a great deal to prevent a recurrence of open and possibly serious hostilities.

The third country in which we are involved is Cambodia. Perhaps the most important problem there is reintegrating into the national community the indigenous resistance forces, which again have received communist support. It is our hope that Canada, as a member of that commission, will be able to help pave the way to a prosperous and peaceful future in that country. It was reported a few days ago in the press that the king of Cambodia abdicated because of the unjustified interference of the commission in domestic concerns of that country, more particularly in his desire to have the people vote on a new constitution. There is no ground for that charge, nor has there been any unwarranted interference of any kind by the commission in the domestic affairs of that country. Some intervention has been necessary under the terms of the armistice. The commission has not gone beyond those terms.

Before going on to other matters I should like to pay tribute, and I know the house will agree with me in this, to the very fine and unselfish work which is being done by our people in Indo-China, not only by the chief commissioner, a very distinguished Canadian who has served his country well both in peace and war, Mr. Sherwood Lett, and the other Canadian commissioners who are members of the external affairs department, but by all the members of our armed services and our foreign service, numbering now something over 160, who are in these three countries. Many of them have to work and live under conditions of discomfort, hardship and even danger. They are, however, carrying out their difficult assignments with resourcefulness, with devotion, with patience and

skill. Theirs is an important contribution to the maintenance of peace in Indo-China, and they are making a fine impression wherever they work as representatives of Canada.

I should like particularly to pay my deep respect to the memory of Mr. Jack Thurrott, one of our department's foreign service officers, who had his promising career cut short in Indo-China when he met with a tragic accident while serving as political adviser to the Canadian commissioner in Laos.

To the question as to how long Canadians are committed to serve with these commissions in these far-off countries, the very names of which were unfamiliar to most of our people only a short time ago, there is no simple answer. The agreements themselves are not specific on the point. We intend to keep our representatives there as long, but only as long, as they can make a useful contribution to the implementation of the armistice agreement reached at Geneva, and therefore to peace in that part of the world.

The second sector of the three I have mentioned is Korea. The last time I reported to the house on Korea was on June 11 last. I said then, referring to the Geneva conference which was then meeting, that if some satisfactory answers were not soon forthcoming from the communist side of that conference on the matter of free elections and all that implied, and if the communist powers at Geneva were not prepared to agree to international supervision of an election by a workable commission acceptable to the United Nations and composed of genuine neutrals, the United Nations side might shortly have to consider whether it was worth while continuing the effort at Geneva to reach agreement for the peaceful unification of Korea.

Shortly after I made that statement the communist representatives at Geneva made it crystal clear that they would neither agree to a Korea united through genuinely free elections nor accept the mandate of the United Nations mission in the divided peninsula. So the conference ended on June 15, as there was no useful purpose to be served in continuing it.

Subsequently the participating member states on our side informed the United Nations in a joint report of the failure of the conference. When the last session of the general assembly reached the Korean item on its agenda the communists had not at that time given any indication of a change in their position, so the assembly could make no move last autumn in New York toward the achievement of peace and unification on any satisfactory basis. All that could be done was to pass a resolution, and that was done by a vote of 50 to 5, approving the report reaffirming the United Nations objective in Korea,