

"His Majesty first revealed his reform proposals on February 19. When the Commission met the Prime Minister on February 24, it declined to express any views on the proposals even when invited to do so by the Prime Minister. It informed the Prime Minister that it was awaiting the official report.

"On February 26 the Commission wrote to the Prime Minister requesting an audience with His Majesty to seek clarification on certain aspects of the reform proposals. The Prime Minister confirmed on February 28 that elections would be held on the basis of the present Constitution. In view of this decision the Chairman informed the Prime Minister that the Commission wished to withdraw its request for an audience with His Majesty. Nothing further was done by the Commission in this matter till March 2 when it learnt that His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk had abdicated.

"This resume of events shows that the Commission had not taken any official position on the King's plan for constitutional changes.

"Any informal suggestions that were made by the Commissioners in their individual capacity were meant to persuade the Government, before it took any final decisions, to examine quietly and carefully the problem whether or not the Royal reforms were compatible with the international obligations undertaken by Cambodia at the Geneva Conference.

"The International Commission has at no time been the recipient of complaints from any Minister of the present Government nor has it had any petitions from any political party as such. It has received a few petitions from individuals commenting on the nature of the proposed constitutional changes, but the International Commission has not to date considered these petitions."

ABDICATION AND AFTER:

53. For a variety of reasons, most of them concerned with developments in the internal political situation in Cambodia, King Norodom Sihanouk decided to abdicate in favour of his parents. An unofficial version of his address over the radio on March 2, announcing his decision to abdicate, is appended as Appendix "H". No official text of the broadcast has reached us from authorised sources.

54. King Norodom Sihanouk's decision to renounce the Throne came as a complete surprise even to his closest advisers. Naturally there was a great deal of speculation as to the reasons for the decision. Since no authorised version of his abdication broadcast was available, there were all kinds of rumours as to what he had said and whom he had criticised. The Commission came in for criticism in a certain section of the foreign Press which based itself on misleading reports circulated by a particular news agency. The charges made against the Commission were: