

Administration in the two northern provinces as such.

32. On 4th June, 1955 the Commission drew the attention of both Parties to its recommendation of 3rd December, 1954 and observed that inordinate delay and lack of progress in bringing about a political settlement were causing concern. The Commission had welcomed the Joint Declaration of 9th March by which both Parties had agreed not to resort to force or take any aggressive action in the two northern provinces. However, no amelioration had resulted and the frequency and seriousness of incidents had increased. In the circumstances, the Commission urged both Parties to reopen and continue their negotiations for an early political settlement.

33. The Commission added that it would always be ready to offer its good offices, at the request of the Parties.

34. The Royal Laotian Government had originally decided in accordance with the usual procedure to hold the general elections on 28th August, 1955. However, on 6th June, 1955 the 'Pathet Lao' sent a letter to the Royal Laotian Government asking that they "stop immediately the illegal elections, stop immediately the despatch of forces to attack the two provinces, and resume immediately the political conference so that the two Parties can discuss and take all necessary action to organise general elections throughout the territory of Laos, can ensure for all Laotian citizens freedom of voting, of being elected and freedom to carry out electoral campaigns, in conformity with the spirit and the letter of the Geneva Agreement and the Joint Declaration of the nine participating powers."

35. On the other hand, on 7th June, 1955 the Royal Government informed the Commission that the general elections were approaching and that as long as Royal Administration was not re-established in the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua, it would not be possible to organise elections in those areas in accordance with the electoral law. However, the National Assembly in a joint session on 10th June decided to postpone the date of election to 25th December, 1955.

36. On 15th June, 1955 the Commission wrote a letter to the Royal Government the text of which is reproduced in paragraph 70.

37. The position of the 'Pathet Lao' in this regard was re-stated in a communication dated 30th June, 1955 to the Royal Government:-

"As to the question relating to the two provinces, from the beginning of the talks to this day, in the conferences as well as in the letters addressed to the Royal Government and also to the International Commission, the Political Delegation of the 'Pathet Lao' Forces has never refused to examine this question, but reciprocally, it has suggested to the Political Delegation of the Royal Government to examine the proposal of the 'Pathet Lao' Forces. This