

and France — will meet with the permanent Council of NATO to inform Council members of the results and to consult with them on further steps to be taken.

The disarmament working group will be reporting to the NATO Council next week. This is all being done, of course, in order to keep the various member nations of NATO fully informed of the current situation and also to get their suggestions.

Laotian Problem

Now, a word about Laos. I know you all know where that is. It is part of the former Indochina, out in Southeast Asia.

One of the problems which has given rise to considerable concern in the past few months has been the disturbed situation in Laos. We really have had some sleepless nights about this question.

In August the Laotian Government received reports that fighting had broken out in the northeastern part of the country between the Communist-orientated Pathet-Lao and Laotian government forces. At that time the Laotian Government stated that the Pathet-Lao were being given active assistance by North Vietnam and on September 4 it appealed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for assistance in halting "aggression", and in preventing the spread of fighting.

Canada has had a direct interest in Laos since the 1954 Geneva Conference, when we were named along with India and Poland to the International Commissions to supervise the cease-fire agreement for the three states of Indochina, that is, the three different Commissions, for Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam.

The Commission for Laos was adjourned *sine die* in July 1958, at the request of the Laotian Government, following the completion of the political settlement envisaged by the cease-fire agreement.

While the Commission has remained in adjournment, Canada has nonetheless maintained its interest in Laos, and we viewed the disturbances of last summer with considerable concern.

It has been the view of the Canadian Government that the framework established by the Geneva Conference, which has done much to maintain the peace and stability of Indochina, does not preclude the United Nations from playing a part in relieving international tension in the region. The United Nations has a legitimate interest in that area, and can play an important part in supplementing the arrangements made at Geneva. The arrangements made at Geneva were not arrived at under the United Nations.

When the Laotian appeal was discussed by the Security Council last September, the Canadian Delegation supported the resolution to establish a sub-committee to inquire into the situation.

The Canadian representative pointed out during the debate that the Government of Canada had maintained a consistent position that the principles of the Geneva settlement should be maintained and that the obligations arising out of it rested on all parties who participated in it.