

*External Affairs*

to which it was assigned. In each case, however—and this point is sometimes forgotten—the execution of the terms of the cease-fire agreement is the responsibility of the two sides directly concerned. The international commissions have no enforcement powers and their functions are purely mediatory, judicial and supervisory.

In Viet Nam the main provisions of the cease-fire agreement for withdrawal and re-deployment of French forces from north Viet Nam and Viet Minh forces from the south have so far been carried out reasonably well. This regroupment process which is to be completed, I believe, by May 18 has taken place without serious incident and is now well advanced. That is no mean achievement. I think we can take some satisfaction from the knowledge that the international commission, with Canadian membership, in its supervisory role and through mediation has helped to bring about this situation.

In relation to those clauses of the cease-fire agreement designed to maintain the military status quo and forbidding the introduction into Viet Nam of fresh troops, arms or munitions except on a restricted replacement basis, the international commission through its inspection teams, fixed and mobile, has tried to maintain a check on men and materials entering the country. It has taken some time to establish the inspection machinery which is required for this purpose, and I certainly am not yet in a position to say how effective it will prove to be.

In other parts of the world we have already had some experience with the difficulties encountered by international commissions with communist representation in an effort to police activities of this kind. Hence in Viet Nam, if one of the parties to the agreement is determined to circumvent these provisions of the agreement the international commission is not likely to be able to prevent it, though the inspection activities which are possible and which are being undertaken will certainly make, and indeed are making, violations more difficult.

With respect to those provisions of the cease-fire agreement relating to the right of democratic freedom and the movement of refugees, the record is not satisfactory. This has been a matter of great concern to us in view of our responsibility on this commission, because it has involved the fate of many thousands of Christians who have suddenly found themselves under the hard and intolerant rule of a communist administration. Our own representative on the Viet Nam commission has spared no effort

to see to it that the commission does all within its power to facilitate the movement of persons from one zone to the other as is provided in the armistice agreement itself. In this the commission has had some success; but it has also encountered difficulties, particularly, it is fair to add, because of the obstructive tactics of the communist government in northern Viet Nam. But here again it must be remembered that the responsibility for carrying out the terms of the agreement rests solely with the parties, who must cooperate with at least a minimum of good faith if the provisions of the armistice are to be properly implemented. All the commission can do is mediate, supervise and conciliate; it cannot enforce.

Notwithstanding these limitations on its powers and certain delays and obstructions that it has encountered—and they all have not been in the north—it is true to say that thousands of refugees from the north are now free in southern Viet Nam because of the international commission. As a matter of fact I think there has been a movement southward of something near half a million refugees. Most of them of course went south before the commission was established.

Our responsibilities on the supervisory commission in Viet Nam do not at the present time extend beyond the supervision of the implementation of the cease-fire agreement. The governments represented on that commission have not received any invitation or directive from the Geneva conference powers with respect to the supervision of elections that are to take place in due course in Viet Nam, as envisaged in the final declaration of the Geneva conference. It is expected, however, that we will be asked to do this along with the other two governments represented on the commission. So far as we are concerned, the responsibilities and procedures regarding the holding of elections would have to be defined satisfactorily and clearly by agreement between the parties concerned before we would be willing to undertake specific tasks in that connection as members of an international commission.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just a word about Laos, the second of these three countries. The main problem facing the commission in Laos has to do with the two northern provinces of Phongsaly and Samneua where the fighting forces of the so-called Pathet Lao, which have communist support, were concentrated pending a political settlement and their subsequent reintegration into the national community of Laos. So far as these northern areas of Laos are concerned, all you have to do is look at a map of that part of the world to realize their strategic importance, standing