

state its case separately. This was a fairly lengthy business, for each side had a great deal to say and further time was required for translation into and out of Vietnamese, French and English.

When the two sides had finished arguing their cases, the International Commission held a private meeting to analyze further the causes of friction and to see whether proposals could be framed that would be fair and would at the same time satisfy each side that its particular worries could be met. As the evidence and the arguments were reviewed, the outlines of a solution began to emerge, drafts on various points were hastily scribbled in various hands, and revised until they seemed satisfactory. At length the two sides were called in and the Commission's proposals were put to them by the Chairman. After brief study they were accepted, and an awkward corner had been turned. As a result of a 5½ hour meeting—from 3.30 till 9.00—a deadlock had been broken and the two sides expressed their appreciation to the International Commission for doing what they themselves had been quite unable to do. The Commission acquired both prestige and self-confidence in the process.

Change-over of Hanoi

Another good example, a little later, of the role of the Commissions occurred at the time of the handing over of Hanoi from the French Union side to the side of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The agreement provided that the French Union forces were to withdraw from Hanoi by a given date and the two sides got together and worked plans. The International Commission of course was not given the responsibility for putting the plans into effect. That responsibility rested clearly with the two sides. It was for the International Commission to supervise, to observe, to mediate if necessary and to try to smooth over difficulties. For the transfer of Hanoi, an extremely detailed plan was worked out by the two sides and with very little reference to the Commission as far as the purely military aspects were concerned.

There were some difficulties, however, with regard to the civil aspects. The two sides could not agree on how, for example, the handing over of public utilities should be managed, and there the commission was able to offer suggestions that were accepted by the two sides, and allowed for the handing over without any interruption of the water works, the power plant, and so on.

The change-over started early in the morning of October 9 and Hanoi was handed over sector by sector. The town had been divided into a great many sectors of perhaps four or five city blocks each. At a given moment, as laid down in the plan an officer from the D.R. and an officer from the French Union would get together. They checked their watches, their maps. The French officer would obtain a receipt and off he would go with his vehicles and a column of DR vehicles would move in. This took place throughout the day as the movement converged on the big bridge that crosses the Red River. By the end of the day the last French forces had moved out. While this was going on, the International Commission had a number of mobile inspection teams going through the city in white jeeps to be on hand if any difficulties should arise, and to indicate that in a sense the eyes of the world were on this exercise.

The members of the Commission themselves spent a good deal of time observing various stages of the transfer and were present when the French Union forces left the city. The change-over at Hanoi was perhaps the most