

- (c) Important agreements dealing with questions of principle should be signed by the Prime Minister of the Royal Government and the Head of the Forces of 'Pathet Lao'. Less important agreements should be signed by the Heads of the two Delegations but would become effective only after approval by their principals;
- (d) The seat of the Joint Political Council should be in Vientiane.

28. These rival proposals were not accepted by the Parties. Nonetheless, they met in a political conference at Plaine-des-Jarres on 19th April, 1955. However, six days later, the Royal Laotian Government withdrew from it claiming that no basis for agreement existed.

29. The Royal Laotian Government suggested examining at these meetings "those problems considered the most urgent". They proposed that the separation of the armed elements of both Parties in the provinces of Sam Neua and Phong Saly should be considered so that the Joint Declaration of 9th March, 1955 (Appendix 'A') could be implemented and the establishment of the Royal Administration in the two northern provinces made easier.

30. The Royal Government also suggested the creation of a Joint Political Commission placed under the supreme authority of the Royal Government with the primary task of settling the civil and military problems of the two provinces. This proposal, the Royal Government added, "makes a great concession by admitting the principle of immediate incorporation of the 'Pathet Lao' into the Royal Administration of the two provinces, whereas the Geneva Agreement only provides a representation of the Fighting Units of 'Pathet Lao' on the Royal Administration". The Royal Government were opposed to the creation of a Joint Political Commission endowed with authority over the Government. The Geneva Agreement, did not in their opinion, envisage the settlement of the problem by "a merger of two authorities both having a governmental competence but an integration into a National Community which already has its institutions and its government."

31. On 3rd May, 1955, the Canadian Delegation introduced a Draft Interpretative Resolution aimed at guiding the Parties in their negotiations for the political settlement (see Appendix 'B'). This raised a discussion as to whether the Commission had the right to make recommendations in this field. It was agreed that the Commission may offer interpretations to the Parties by analogy with Article 33 of the Geneva Agreement, provided the subject matter was included in the Agreement itself. In the opinion of the Polish Delegation, however, neither the question of the establishment of Royal Administration in the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua nor that of political settlement came within the scope of competence of the Commission, and any interference by the Commission in these matters would mean enlarging its powers and functions beyond the limits of the Geneva Agreement. The Commission's activities could only be maintained in the form of good offices with the approval of both Parties. On 21st May, the Canadian Delegation agreed to postpone discussion on its Draft Resolution on the understanding that it would, instead, raise the question of the establishment of Royal