

delegations. Not only did they have to grapple with the administrative problems mentioned, but there were substantive questions arising out of the Geneva Agreements that had to be dealt with. Moreover, it was not enough merely to get the three headquarters into working shape. It was essential to get the fixed and mobile inspection teams on the ground as soon as possible.

While the few Canadians were battling with administrative and other problems in Indochina, the Department of National Defence at home in Ottawa was selecting officers for duty and arranging for them to be brought together, briefed and despatched to Indochina by air. As a result, on each of four successive days, from September 1 to 4, there arrived in Hanoi an RCAF North Star bringing a group of officers and much-needed supplies and equipment. Thanks to quick but careful planning and the smooth operations of the RCAF, Canada was the first of the powers serving on the Commissions to have a full complement of personnel for the inspection teams ready for duty in Indochina. In particular, the Canadians were far in advance of the Poles, who chose to send their officers by air only as far as Peking, transferring them there to trains running to a point north of the border between China and Viet Nam, and leaving them to make their way to Hanoi by motor transport over extremely indifferent roads. For some time they seemed to the Polish members of the Commission to have disappeared into the void.

It is not intended here to say a great deal about the work of the Commissions, much of it of a delicate nature, but something can be mentioned of the first problem to come before the Viet Nam Commission. The first problem is always a test, and if it is surmounted successfully, the way is easier in the future.

Prisoner-of-War Problem

Within a few days of its arrival in Hanoi, the International Commission was informed by the two sides that they were having difficulty in agreeing on methods of exchanging prisoners-of-war. By using its good offices informally, the Commission was able to get discussions resumed and the exchange proceeded. But within another ten days new difficulties arose and the two sides had reached a complete deadlock on how, when and where prisoners were to be exchanged and in what numbers. Each side had a long list of complaints against the other, and each charged the other with being unreasonable. It was not surprising that there should be difficulties. The release of prisoners-of-war gave rise to acute emotional and political tensions. The two sides had ceased fighting each other only a fortnight earlier and the atmosphere, not surprisingly, was edgy. The Joint Commission, which was dealing with the problem, was working long hours every day, in great heat and without proper rest. In such circumstances, it was understandable that friction should develop.

The International Commission had been created to deal with just such a question as this. It had no powers of enforcement and could issue no orders. It had to rely on its moral authority and by mediation, persuasion and recommendation, to find a solution which the two sides would accept as fair and just. On a given day in August the International Commission spent the morning going over such facts and figures as the two sides had presented, discussing possible ways of getting around the difficulties. In the afternoon, the Commission went to the headquarters of the Joint Commission and heard each side