

is already aware, I led the Canadian Delegation to Paris at the end of February with proposals that would have given the ICCS the reporting authority which we considered necessary to its success.

In the meantime, we had concluded that the other truce supervisory arrangements as laid down in the Agreement left some doubt as to whether the Canadian criteria could be met. As I have said before on all possible occasions, this is no criticism of the Agreements or of those who negotiated them. It is undoubtedly the best agreement that could have been negotiated in the circumstances and the results have, in spite of all, turned the course of world events in a new and more hopeful direction. Our reservations therefore are based simply on a Canadian appreciation that the task as outlined was not one well-suited to Canadian methods and the Canadian temperament. In the final analysis we recognized, however, that what mattered most was the element of good faith on the part of all concerned and this could only be judged by trying to make the machinery work. It was for this purpose that we agreed to serve for an initial period of sixty days -- to which an additional thirty-day grace period was added to enable the parties to find a substitute in the event that we decided not to continue. That 60-day period ends on Thursday.

After returning from Paris I concluded that it would not be possible to reach a well-founded decision without having seen for myself the conditions in which the ICCS and particularly our delegation was operating, or having spoken directly with the leaders of the governments most directly concerned. I had, as the House knows, had several contacts with the U.S. Secretary of State on this subject and was well aware of the views of his government. I wanted to have the views of others as well.

Accordingly, on March 13, a group of representative Canadians, although not unfortunately entirely representative of this House, left for a trip that was to put me in touch with both Vietnamese Governments, the Government of Laos, as well as some leading personalities of the so-called Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Viet-Nam and of the Pathet Lao movement. It was a very intense indoctrination into the facts of life in the ICCS and the attitudes and policies of the governments most directly concerned. I think all those who went came back with at least one impression in common: that is, that the ICCS was not performing the tasks assigned to it under the cease-fire Agreement. I am also quite confident that most of my travelling companions would agree that this was in spite of the best efforts of the Canadian Delegation to make it work. We have heard it from a sufficiently wide variety of sources to accept it as a matter of fact that had it not been for the energy and ingenuity of the Canadian Delegation, even the setting up of the various bodies required by the Agreement would not have taken place as soon as they did.

Although our visit left most of us with misgivings on the operation and success of the ICCS in carrying out its assigned tasks, we also had brought home to us that in some quarters this was seen as of very little consequence. We have been well aware for some time that not everybody shares