

*Supply—External Affairs*

Korea a veto on the election in that part and their insistence that all Chinese troops be out of Korea before the six-months period would end. We feel now—and this is the attitude we are taking at Geneva where the matter is being debated this afternoon—that these proposals on the communist side and the proposals on our side should go to a small negotiating committee. If that suggestion is followed, we shall soon be able to find out whether progress is possible.

It would be unwise to be too optimistic on that score. We therefore ask ourselves what should be done if, at this Korean conference at Geneva, we cannot succeed in bringing about the unification of that unhappy land. I think it would be wise, under these circumstances, to suspend, not to terminate, the conference and to agree to look at the problem again some months ahead when conditions might be a little bit different. I think it would also be wise if this conference, in some form, could confirm armistice arrangements which would remain in effect until a peace settlement becomes possible.

I admit, Mr. Chairman, that we are still far short of the achievement of a peaceful solution of the Korean question. It is an intensely difficult problem and we shall need a large fund of patience if an acceptable solution is to be attained; but there is still hope that such a solution will eventually be attained. Meanwhile I feel—and it is no unimportant result if I am correct in this feeling—that after the Geneva discussions the renewal of hostilities in Korea is much less likely than it might have been before that conference opened.

I should now say something about the Indo-Chinese side of the conference, Mr. Chairman. The situation in respect of this particular conference is, as Sir Winston Churchill said the other day, "in constant flux," and of course it is impossible therefore to make any final report on what has happened or speculate with any degree of assurance on what is likely to happen. The invitation to the Indo-Chinese conference came, as hon. members know, from the Berlin meeting in February. At that meeting of the foreign ministers it was decided that the membership of the Indo-Chinese conference should consist of the four inviting powers, the Chinese People's Republic and other interested states. Therefore at Geneva the inviting powers were confronted at once with the problem of deciding, and only they could make the decision, who were the other interested states.

There were various alternatives that were canvassed. The first was that the conference

[Mr. Pearson.]

would consist of the four, the Chinese communist government and the belligerents, the belligerents including the three associated states of Indo-China and the Viet Minh. Another proposal was that the conference should be widened somewhat to include also the neighbouring states and others directly and immediately concerned or who have commitments in that area.

Finally, it was suggested in some quarters that the conference might be extended even wider to include additional communist states, neutrals and others. After a good deal of discussion among the inviting powers it was decided that the limited conference of the four, the Chinese communists and the belligerent states gave the best prospect of progress and success and that was the decision which was eventually adopted.

As far as Canada's position is concerned, we felt we had no complaint in the circumstances about non-membership in this conference. We have of course in Canada a very definite interest in this problem but no special or separate responsibility for Indo-China or for southeast Asia. We have no regional or special commitments in that part of the world and no question of accepting such has arisen at Geneva. So the policy of our delegation in respect of this very limited conference, which I would point out again excluded even the neighbouring states, was to avoid on the one hand involvement in any specific commitments for which the delegation did not have a mandate and, on the other hand, to avoid any appearance or attitude of indifference to developments, the consequences of which, if they deteriorated into conflict, would certainly concern us and might involve us.

With these considerations in mind, we kept ourselves fully informed of the formal conference talks on Indo-China and participated in many useful informal discussions with delegations who were more directly concerned than we were with the problem of Indo-China and of security in southeast Asia. Our co-operation and our consultation in these discussions was especially close with the delegations of the commonwealth and of the United States. Here, if I may, Mr. Chairman, I should like to pay a very sincere tribute to the work that the foreign secretary of the United Kingdom is doing at this conference. His contacts with what we may call the other side gave him, in a sense, a mediating position on occasions on those matters where mediation was possible, and he is playing that invaluable role, if I may say so, with wisdom, patience and skill.

The problem of Indo-China as we see it is twofold. There is first the short-range problem, and that might in its turn be divided