

5. CONCLUSION

It was a particularly difficult and trying time for the members of the Canadian Mission in Saigon. I think it must be said that they did their job remarkably well in remarkably difficult circumstances. The officers of the Department of Manpower and Immigration carried out their work with a great sense of responsibility in increasingly unproductive circumstances, until it became clear that their presence no longer served a useful purpose. After their departure from Saigon, the members of the Department of External Affairs continued to do their best to discharge their responsibilities in a situation which continued to deteriorate. They did so under the devoted and competent leadership of our Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Ernest Hébert, whose performance in the days leading to the evacuation and in the process of evacuation itself deserves praise. I am sorry that it has instead provoked strong and emotional criticism in some quarters. I think it needs to be said here that in my opinion such criticism is unjustified and unfounded. I can only congratulate the members of the Canadian foreign service for the job they did in the difficult circumstances which I have described.