

VIENTIANE, Laos, Sept. 5 (Agence France-Presse) — Prince Souvanna Phouma, the neutralist Premier of Laos, plans to retire from politics after general elections for a new national assembly are held next April.

"I have worked hard enough for my country, and the coming elections will mean that the political problems of Laos have been resolved and that my task is completed," the Prince said in an interview today.

The prince, who will be 74 next month, had a heart attack a year ago. He has been Premier, off and on, since 1951.

He said he would take no part in the government that would be formed after the elec-

tions, emphasizing that his successor would be chosen by King Savang Vatthana in accordance with the existing Constitution.

"It will be the leader of the majority who will be designated by the sovereign to form the new nonprovisional government of Laos," he said.

The coalition Cabinet he heads is a provisional body in which the dominant pro-Communist, or Vientiane side, nominally command an equal number of ministries. In fact, however, the leftist side controls virtually all of Laos.

It is believed here that the Premier will most probably hand over power to his half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong, the head of the Lao Patriotic

Front, and a year younger than Souvanna Phouma.

Souvanna Phouma said that his country, divided by war for a decade, was now being reunited and that the process had sped up over the last four months. In that period, the Pathet Lao took over areas previously controlled by the Vientiane side, following the flight from Laos of a number of rightist ministers.

"The reunification process," Souvanna Phouma said, "was delayed for a long time by obstacles created by certain ministers in my Government, and I deeply regret the attitude of some who did not want to understand that the aim of the agreement of 1973 was reunification and peace."