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The Last Day On Vietnam Peace Force

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Saigon

Canadian chief delegate Vernon Turner yesterday delivered what might be called the ad interim valedictory for the moribund Vietnamese peace-keeping commission which became even more moribund with Canada's official withdrawal.

Emerging from this final meeting with the International Commission for Control and Supervision, Turner was asked:

"What did you do today?"

"We approved what we did yesterday," he replied.

"What did you do yesterday?" the newsman continued.

"Not much," smiled the graying career diplomat who is returning to Ottawa at the end of Canada's six months of frustration.

OFFICIALS

The departure of the Canadians—which becomes official at midnight last night, Saigon time—brought the commission to a standstill.

Under the Paris peace agreements of last January unanimity is required among the four members to accomplish any official act. With the departure of Canada there can be no four-power unanimity regardless of the view taken by Poland, Hungary and Indonesia, the other three members.

Until the fourth slot is filled the commission will remain in place but unable to do anything. The two nations now most prominently mentioned as replacements—Iran or Brazil—are showing no outward signs of accepting the task.

FAILURE

In practice, this will not change much on the ground in South Vietnam. While the ICCS did succeed in smoothing the exchange of prisoners agreed in Paris, it has notably failed to get the shooting halted.

Last week the Canadians publicly protested the "outrageous treatment" accorded to two Canadian officers held for 18 days by the Viet Cong. The two officers, said Turner, "were denied even the treatment accorded prisoners of war."

MOCKERY

Turner's predecessor as delegation chief, Michel Gauvin, had also said on his departure three weeks ago that the Communist commission members—Poland and Hungary—had often made a "mockery" of the investigation process as signed the ICCS under the Paris accords.

Under the Paris agreements the ICCS was supposed to make investigations of violations and thus dampen the fighting and also play a role in the supervision of supply and troop movements.

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