

General Smuts agreed. We were proposing to ask the Germans to sign a blank cheque, to give up their nationals on demand, and to furnish evidence that we might punish them. We would never sign such an article in respect of our own people.

Sir Robert Borden said that there was another side to the case. Hundreds of thousands of our men who had fought in the war knew that the Germans had been guilty of the most shocking barbarities; they had seen them committed. Were we going to pass these over? Was there nothing that we could do to vindicate the principles of humanity that had been so flagrantly violated? During the war our military courts were entitled to try to punish any enemy person guilty of violation of the laws of war who fell into their hands; the effect of these articles was to extend this jurisdiction into the time of peace and to provide a method of getting the guilty persons into our hands.

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121. *Le secrétaire particulier du Secrétaire britannique
au Premier ministre*

Sir Robert Borden,

Paris, April 28, 1919

I have received a message from Sir Maurice Hankey who is at the meeting of the Council of Four, to the effect that the Prime Minister would be glad if you would get in touch with Mr. Barnes, Mr. Robinson (an American), and M. Colliard¹ (a Frenchman), in regard to the question about which you spoke to him this morning,² and if you can get them to agree, then the Council of Four will agree to your point of view.

A. J. SYLVESTER

122. *Le Premier ministre au premier ministre du Royaume-Uni*

SECRET

Dear Mr. Lloyd George,

Paris, April 29, 1919

I had an interview this morning with Mr. Robinson who is the chief American expert on labour conditions and to whom I was referred by your letter of yesterday. We discussed the question very amicably but I found him quite immovable in his opposition to my proposal that Canada and the other Dominions should not be barred from selection for representation on the Governing Body. He based his view upon supposed public opinion in the United States which regards the British Empire as exercising too much influence in the League of Nations and in the Labour Convention. Apparently public opinion is so ill-informed in that country as to believe that in matters affecting the peace of the world or labour conditions, the Governments of the various Dominions do not exercise a thoroughly independent judgment. The

¹ Ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité sociale de France; conseiller de la délégation française à la Conférence de la Paix sur les questions de Travail.

² Voir le document suivant.