

1949, the Cabinet agreed that Canada should participate in the forthcoming Diplomatic Conference and also agreed that the Secretary of State for External Affairs, in consultation with other interested Departments select the personnel of the Canadian Delegation. The Canadian Delegation has been selected and will be headed by M.E. Vaillancourt, Canadian Minister to Yugoslavia.

4. An Interdepartmental Committee, composed of representatives from the Departments of External Affairs, Finance, Justice, National Defence, National Health and Welfare, Secretary of State, Transport, the Office of the Civil Defence Co-ordinator and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, has devoted much study to the texts of the Conventions that are to be considered at the Diplomatic Conference. This study was conducted with a view to preparing instructions to guide the Canadian Delegation. The detailed comments of the Committee are contained in the attached briefs.†

5. Generally speaking, the revised texts of the first three Conventions, relating to the armed services, are substantially the same as those presently binding upon the signatories, but in some respects important changes are proposed. The proposed Convention relating to Civilians is entirely new. The Committee feels that Canada has a direct interest in these Conventions and should press for certain alterations in the texts on some of the more important issues, among which are the following:

(a) The Conventions should provide only the *minimum* standard of treatment to be given to war victims and allow for improvement in the interests of humanity.

(b) It is proposed to give preferential treatment to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to national Red Cross Societies. Canada should propose that all nationally recognized humanitarian agencies be extended the same privileges.

(c) It is proposed that governments shall incorporate into their educational systems the study of the new Conventions. Canada should propose that this requirement be subject to the constitutional position of the signatories.

(d) It is proposed that the four Conventions shall apply in the event of civil war. Canada should support the United Kingdom which strongly opposes this suggestion.

(e) The 1929 Conventions granted to medical personnel and chaplains attached to armies immunity against attack and the right of repatriation if captured. Canada should support the new proposal to retain such personnel in sufficient numbers to provide medical and spiritual aid to their fellow prisoners.

(f) Canada should support the addition of the following to those considered prisoners of war under the 1929 Convention: correspondents, civilian members of air crew, persons concerned with welfare of armed forces, organized "partisans", and members of merchant marine.

(g) The proposed civilian Convention will apply to all persons, in the hands of a power of which they are not nationals as well as to the whole population of a belligerent. Canada should propose that suitable reservations be made respecting the obligations of a signatory power towards its own nationals and persons suspected of hostile activities.