

way in which those rules were debated at the outset—not by Canada—the work of the conference, and the atmosphere in which it was carried on, were adversely affected. Further, the fact that everything had to be translated into three languages, not simultaneously, and the fixing of October 15 for a deadline for the conference because it was necessary to meet the arrangements made for holding a meeting of the united nations assembly in New York on October 23, combined with other factors to reduce the usefulness of the conference and gave it a deadline that was almost impossible to meet without overtaxing human endurance.

For example, toward the end, the territorial commission on Italy met at nine o'clock at night and went on until next morning at six o'clock. But that record was broken by one commission which began at ten o'clock one morning and continued until nearly three o'clock the following afternoon, making twenty-eight and a half consecutive hours of sitting.

The way in which the discussion developed on the issues which came before the conference tended to emphasize the vote and the manner of voting. Peace cannot be made either by votes or vetoes; peace must be made by understanding, patiently worked out by people who have the interests of peace at heart.

The conference finished its work on October 15 and, with regard to a number of matters on which the council of foreign ministers had not been able to reach agreement prior to the conference, the conference expressed its views. Those views were received and considered by the council at its meetings in New York and undoubtedly contributed to the settlements that were ultimately arrived at in December.

Now the treaties have been signed. By and large they are not bad treaties. But I have every conviction that they are better treaties by reason of the fact that the Paris conference was held; they are better treaties by reason of the fact that seventeen nations were called in to consultation with the four great powers in working out the texts of the agreements.

The Paris conference showed what should be avoided in holding a peace conference; but it did not show that a conference should not be held; indeed, quite the contrary.

With relation to the hon. member for Peel's suggestion, that we should have put ourselves on record earlier, may I say I do not think it would have been possible at one conference to have expressed oneself at great length with regard to the procedure that was to be followed at another conference.

The final discussions in plenary session on the text of the treaties and recommendations began on October 7. The conference had to close on October 15, and there were exactly six sitting days for the final discussions, and also for the votes. Voting took almost half the time. So that everything anyone had to say had to be compressed into a very short space.

But to show that we did not need to wait until now to criticize the procedure, I should like to put on record the observations I made at the final session. On October 8 I said this:

We hope the experience gained at this conference will not be wasted. For example every delegate here knows of one deficiency or another in the rules of procedure. These rules should be examined and amplified in the light of our experience. Suggestions might be made with regard to machinery for preparing the drafts of the other peace treaties which have still to be evolved. We hope that before this conference concludes, or soon after, nations wishing to do so should be encouraged to put forward the suggestions for the procedure to be adopted in making the peace for Germany and Japan.

So that I had in mind at Paris in October the view expressed by the hon. member for Peel today in March, and I believe I expressed this kind of view more fully than any other delegate among the twenty-one nations at the conference. None of those who spoke dealt with the questions of procedure and the lessons to be learned from our experience at Paris as fully as I had done in these and in other observations in my short speech.

Now, with regard to the second point, namely as to whether or not the withdrawal of the Canadian forces from western Europe had any effect whatever on our present position, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the house there is no proof whatever that the return of Canadians to their homeland, many of whom had been absent for six years, had any effect whatever on our position abroad, or in the making of the peace. To the contrary, I say there is positive proof that it had no effect. That is seen in the position occupied by Belgium and Holland which have had occupying forces in part of the German territory, in one of the zones. Yet they are receiving treatment no different from that received by Canada at the present time.

There was never any hint that the presence of occupying forces would give more weight to anyone's voice in Europe. There was never any suggestion that that would improve Canada's position with regard to representation on the allied military government or the control council at Berlin. Canada was never invited to become a member of either; she was never