

Now, Mr. Chairman, I can of course--and the committee would expect me to--report in greater detail on the Geneva conference on Far Eastern affairs. That conference, however, is also still proceeding, and because of that fact there is a limit to what I can appropriately say at this time, and certainly no final report is yet possible.

I have returned from Geneva myself, but the Canadian Delegation remains, and is taking an active part in the work. It is a small delegation, but as I am no longer a part of it, I think possibly I can say with propriety that, in my view, it is a well-informed and efficient delegation. If the situation seems to require it, of course I can return to Geneva without delay.

The conference now has been going on for some weeks, and I think it is generally agreed that while it would be a great mistake to break it off as long as there is any, even remote, possibility of success, it should not be allowed to go on indefinitely if it becomes demonstrably clear that it is being used only for propaganda purposes.

The conference probably should not be referred to as such because in reality there are two conferences going on at the same time in Geneva. As hon. members know, the first one deals with Korea. The origin of that conference is to be found in the United Nations armistice of July 1953, concluded in Korea. It will be remembered that in the terms of that armistice there was a provision that a political conference should follow within three months. That was not possible but the conference is now taking place and though it is not a United Nations conference in any formal sense, I think it can be regarded as fulfilling the provision of the armistice agreement which called for such a conference.

The immediate origin of the conference is to be found in the meeting of the foreign ministers at Berlin of February of this year when it was agreed by those foreign ministers to invite the United Nations governments which had forces in Korea, the Republic of Korea, the communist government of Peking, and the communist government of North Korea, to take part in a conference to meet at Geneva.

The membership of this conference is in a sense two-sided. Indeed, it might be considered as three-sided. There is the United Nations side, which consists of 15 delegations, including the Canadian, there is the Republic of Korea side, which is distinct to some extent from the others because they are not yet a member of the United Nations; and then there is the communist side consisting of the three communist delegations.

We anticipated before we went to Geneva a good deal of difficulty in getting this conference going because of its unique character and composition. There might indeed have been great difficulties over organization and procedure and all that sort of thing which can cause so much delay if any one wishes to use procedure in order to cause delay. The communists very often in the past have been adept at that kind of thing.