

Peace Settlement with Germany

The text of this invitation appeared to the Canadian government to confirm its misgivings over the procedure envisaged for the settlement with Germany. No indication was given that adequate provision would be made for any of the allies other than the four great powers to discuss their views with the council of foreign ministers or to take part in the actual work of preparing the treaties. On January 14, therefore, the Canadian government through the High Commissioner for Canada in London placed before the special deputies a brief statement asking that consideration be given to an improved procedure for the preparation of the peace settlement with Germany. The suggestions made were designed to associate the allies more directly with the drafting of the treaty and to avoid the difficulties which had arisen in the settlement with Italy and the other satellites and which had become evident in the peace conference at Paris. The text of this statement has already been made public in a press release which was issued in Ottawa on January 16.

The special deputies made no reply to these representations. On January 17, however, the High Commissioner for Canada in London received a communication from the secretary of the special deputies asking if he would be prepared to appear on January 25 to present the views of the Canadian government on the German problem.

It appeared to the government that by this action we were placed in a somewhat difficult position. We had made what we thought were reasonable and constructive representations on the question of procedure. The special deputies were not apparently, in a position to take notice of these. We had, on the other hand, been asked again to participate in a procedure which appeared to us to provide an entirely inadequate method for associating Canada with the peace settlement. Not unreasonably, we wished to be assured that if we complied with this request we would not thereby appear to give our concurrence to procedures we did not regard as satisfactory. The High Commissioner for Canada in London was therefore instructed to place a specific question in this regard before the deputies. I shall now quote the text of a letter of January 20 from the High Commissioner for Canada in London to the secretariat of the council of foreign ministers in which this question was communicated:

20th January, 1947.

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your communication of 16th January informing me, on behalf of the deputies for Germany, that arrangements would be made for the hearing by the deputies of such views as the Canadian government might

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

wish to present on the German problem on Saturday, January 25, if this time was convenient.

I have informed the government of Canada of this invitation and I have been asked to address to the deputies the following inquiry on its behalf.

If the government of Canada now submits observations on the substance of the peace settlement with Germany, without consideration having previously been given to its comment on procedure, what assurances are the special deputies prepared to give to the government of Canada that opportunity will be given at a future date to discuss the settlement with Germany either with the special deputies or with the council of foreign ministers?

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

N. A. Robertson,
High Commissioner.

W. D. McAfee, Esq.,
Council of Foreign Ministers,
Lancaster House, W. 1.

On January 29, the special deputies replied orally through the chairman to the High Commissioner for Canada in London stating that their instructions gave them no power to give the assurances which we desired. There is still no certainty, therefore, that Canada will be able to participate in the peace settlement with Germany in an appropriate manner.

The matter remains undecided but we are still hopeful that some satisfactory solution will be found. The government is, of course, anxious not to prejudice the position, one way or the other or to do anything which would make a satisfactory solution more difficult.

In the circumstances, the government has felt that there could be no advantage in a Canadian representative making a formal appearance before the deputies, presenting his submission without the privilege of discussion, and then withdrawing. At the same time the Canadian government wishes to give all practicable assistance to the special deputies in their work, without prejudice to any representations it might desire to make at a later date. To this end certain preliminary views on the settlement with Germany have been prepared. In the belief that these preliminary views may be of interest, the High Commissioner in London has been instructed to communicate them tonight to the chairman of the special deputies.

I now table a copy of the memorandum in which these views are set forth. In the covering letter in which this memorandum is being communicated to the special deputies for Germany, our high commissioner says:

I have been instructed by the government of Canada to submit to the special deputies the attached memorandum which gives its views on the German peace settlement. In submitting