

*Paris Peace Conference*

In particular, we have considered whether it would be desirable or necessary that Canada's representation should be along the lines of our representation at the united nations conference on international organization at San Francisco, which was concerned with bringing into being the charter of the united nations, and at the preparatory commission for the united nations organization which met in London in November and December last, and at the first part of the first assembly of the united nations which met in London in January and February of this year. On these occasions several members of the administration and representatives of national parties in parliament were present.

There are important differences between the organization and working procedures of a body, such as the assembly of the united nations, and a diplomatic conference such as that which is meeting in Paris at the end of this month. The united nations charter stipulates that each member of the united nations is to have five delegates and five alternates representing it at the general assembly, and the assembly is organized into a number of standing committees which meet simultaneously to discuss the disposition of the several items on the assembly agenda. The assembly and its committees are public deliberative bodies, governed by rules of procedure very similar to those followed in our own parliament. The assembly does, perhaps, contain within itself the germ of a world parliament. It is our hope that it will develop in strength and responsibility along these lines.

The Paris conference, on the other hand, is essentially a diplomatic conference, at which most governments will be represented by their foreign ministers. It is not yet clear how the conference will be finally organized for the transaction of its business. Considering the nature and history of the questions which are bound to come up for consideration, it is most improbable that the conference will conduct its business through a series of public committees reporting to a plenary session.

In considering Canada's representation at Paris, we have had to take these facts into account. We have also had to keep in mind the fact that our parliament is still in session, and that its proceedings may continue for some time. Account also had to be taken of the fact that the united nations assembly which adjourned in London in February will resume its meeting in New York during September.

The government, I might say, contemplates, for the meeting of the united nations assembly

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

in New York, a delegation similar in its representative character to that of the delegation to the London meeting.

In the light of all these circumstances, the government feels, as I have already intimated, that the delegation to the Paris conference should not be any larger than the situation appears to warrant and to justify. I may add that, having regard to the significance of the conference, my colleagues share the view expressed by the leader of the opposition on Friday of last week, when he said that in his judgment the country would expect the Prime Minister to go to the Paris conference and that parliament would also expect this.

Quite frankly, I have been deeply concerned as to whether I should be away from parliament for a second time this session. I feel, however, that other countries to be represented at the conference, as well as our own, may also hold the view expressed by the leader of the opposition and by my colleagues. In coming to the conclusion that I should make every effort to go, I may say that I have been helped by the assurance of the leader of the opposition that during my absence he and his party would be disposed to facilitate the work of the house. I am accordingly making my plans to be in Paris in time for the opening meeting of the conference.

I shall have with me as a member of the delegation the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Claxton). I shall also have associated with me as members of the delegation a small staff including the under-secretary of state for external affairs, the clerk of the privy council and the Canadian ambassadors to France and the U.S.S.R. If, after my arrival in Paris, when I have full particulars of the organization of the conference, and of the rules of procedure to be followed, it should appear that, in Canada's interests, it would be advisable to have additional representation, I shall not hesitate to have matters arranged accordingly.

I have one or two other statements to make to the house, but if my hon. friends wish to raise any questions with regard to the statement I have just made I would defer making the other statements until after they have spoken.

Mr. JOHN BRACKEN (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am aware and the house is aware that an announcement of this kind at this time is not debatable, and I appreciate the Prime Minister's indicating that we might wish to make a comment. I am sure Your Honour would have permitted it in any case. When the press intimated a