

manner the procedure for drawing up this settlement to avoid differences of opinion on procedural matters at a later time, such as those which took up so many sessions of the Paris conference.

The adoption of proposals of this nature would space the Canadian government in a position to participate in the German settlement in an appropriate manner. If a procedure were devised which would make it possible for representatives of the smaller powers to be associated in the actual drafting of the treaty through work on the committees, and if the treaty so drafted were accepted without major changes when it was referred to the council of foreign ministers, it might then be possible to provide for the final acceptance of the treaty in the brief and formal conference, thus avoiding the necessity for a prolonged conference such as that in Paris, at which the Italian and other treaties were reviewed.

Mr. JOHN BRACKEN (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the members of the house have listened not only with interest but with entire approval to the remarks of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent) with respect to this important matter. We, of course, have not seen anything of the documents except as they have appeared in the press. I want to thank the minister for taking the steps necessary to make those documents available to us now. I have just one question to ask. He has indicated that the provisional attitude of the government with respect to this matter will appear in the documents which he has tabled. Will the minister table all relevant documents at the earliest opportunity?

I should just like to say one thing further. In so far as we have been able to gather the attitude of the government, I personally wish to commend them for it. Canada played her part honourably in the war. Personally I feel that it would be an insult to this nation if she were denied the right to sit in at the discussions and settlement of the terms of peace with Germany. Without committing ourselves to approval of the details of whatever the government may have done, I do commend them for their general approach.

Having said that, may I take the opportunity of congratulating the minister on his appointment to the portfolio of External Affairs. I only hope that he will tell us more in the next few months than his predecessor has told us in his term of office. It was my privilege to sit with the right hon. gentleman for six or eight weeks in November and December last at the United Nations general

assembly; if he will only carry on as well here as he did there in those first two months, I predict that he will be a success in his new portfolio and that the members of the House of Commons will be well informed on external affairs. We wish him every success in his new office.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: The leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) asked if all the relevant documents would be tabled. I do not know of any that would be relevant, other than the terms of the invitation that was received through the embassy in Washington, the first communication that was made to the deputies on January 14, and the covering letter referred to in the statement of today. I should be glad to add those to the documents tabled, and they will constitute the complete file of matters that were put in writing in that connection.

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, in view of what the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) has said, and the report which has been made to the house by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent), I think it would be well to let the government and the country know that, as far as we are concerned, we believe that the position taken by the government in the initial stages of the discussion with the foreign ministers was the position that should have been taken.

I am wondering whether, at this late stage, the submission of even a memorandum does not detract from that original position. I would rather have seen the government of Canada stand firmly by the position that since Canada contributed during the war in every respect to the extent of her resources and, unlike some of the powers who are now denying us the right to speak at the conference, was in the war with Germany from the beginning, it might have been well if we had stood by the position originally taken.

I should like to say also that I think Canada has a contribution to make now. During the war we made our contribution in men and material. Since the war ended, Canada has made a tremendous contribution to the feeding of the suffering people of the world. These contributions should not be overlooked. It seems to me we can still make a valuable contribution toward laying the foundations of a permanent peace and to the feeding of the peoples of the world. Canada should not be denied her right to participate fully in the drafting of the peace treaty with Germany.