

summed up the position. "I would rather," said Mr. Bevin, "take a long time and produce a good peace in the end, than have a loose one slopping over with false formulas," and Mr. Marshall: "the differences between the Western Democracies and Russia have been neither increased nor decreased during the Conference. We understand now what those differences are." Both Ministers declared that the differences could be solved, but their apparent optimism must be judged against the background of Mr. Marshall's question "How long can Europe endure while we are struggling with the problem?"

On the 23rd April the hard-worked Deputies produced a list of agreements, disagreements and conditional agreements on the German problem. As has so often been said before, agreement on the political organisation of Germany depends on agreement on the economic unity of Germany, which in turn depends upon agreement with the Russians upon reparations, &c.

A considerable amount of work has been done on the subject of procedure for preparing the peace treaty; but here again, partial agreements, though better than nothing, are to have no validity until agreement has been reached on the whole question. Part I of the Deputies' Summing-up deals with denazification, demilitarisation, &c. Agreements on this part go to the Control Council as directives, disagreements for information and study.

In attributing the rejection of the Four Power Treaty to M. Molotov, Mr. Marshall declared that his Government did not withdraw the offer. The Treaty therefore remains alive, though it is in a state of indefinitely suspended animation. Some apparent agreement was reached on the return of prisoners-of-war to Germany. Mr. Bevin's proposal of the end of 1948 as a final date was accepted. It should be recalled that Russia's figure of prisoners held by her is generally considered to be an under-estimate.

The Austrian Treaty, which the Foreign Ministers in New York had told their Deputies to prepare, failed to materialize because, as Mr. Marshall pointed out on the 23rd April, the Soviet had not advanced from the position which they had taken up in February, and because they had widened the gap between themselves and the West. They gave the clear impression that they did not desire peace with a "free and independent Austria." German assets remained one of the two centres of disagreement, since to accept the Russian

interpretation would be to guarantee the dependence of Austria. Mr. Marshall proposed that the General Assembly should be asked to make recommendations for a settlement of the question if it was still outstanding in September. This proposal was immediately followed by the most startling and hopeful response that M. Molotov has made to Western ways of thought, a response which may prove to be the most important achievement of the Conference. It showed, provokingly late in the day, that the four Ministers could all practise the art of agreement through discussion, and that M. Molotov could, like his colleagues, tolerate a fact-finding commission. M. Molotov rejected an appeal to the Assembly; but proposed a commission of the four Powers to examine all the articles of the Austrian Treaty which were still in dispute, especially articles 35 (German Assets) and 42 (United Nations property in Austria). Mr. Marshall was anxious for a Committee of experts in Vienna to study the conditions for a final settlement of the German assets question, and Mr. Bevin insisted on the need to get at the facts of the "assets" and "property" questions. Chiefly as a result of his initiative the Council adopted the following decision: "The Council of Foreign Ministers agree to establish a Commission, consisting of representatives of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and of France charged with the examination of all disagreed questions of the Austrian Treaty. The Commission shall include a Committee of Experts to give special consideration to Article 35 and the appropriate parts of Article 42 and to the establishment of concrete facts.

The aim of the Commission shall be to co-ordinate the points of view of the Allied Governments represented on it.

The Commission shall submit its report without delay to the Council of Foreign Ministers.

The Commission will sit in Vienna," and begin its meetings on the 12th May. Article 42 is the other centre of disagreement, because it includes oil, and Russia has an eye on these oil properties, which belong in part to Nationals of the Allies. The Russians have subsequently claimed that the co-ordination of the Allied points of view refers only to the question of German assets.

Two other matters were raised on the last day of the Conference, the size of occupation forces, and the return of German prisoners-of-war. Mr. Byrnes had

originally proposed that Russia should maintain 200,000 men, the U.S. and the U.K. 140,000 each, with 70,000 for France. M. Molotov now suggested 200,000 Russians, 200,000 between the U.S. and the U.K. and 50,000 for France. Mr. Bevin replied with 145,000 each for the U.S. and the U.K. It was agreed that "considering the need to reduce the size of occupation forces in Germany, the Control Council should consider the question and determine

the strength of the occupying troops of the four Powers as at the 1st September, 1947." The report should be submitted before the 1st June.

Mr. Bevin asked that the Powers still holding Austrian prisoners—Russia—and to a lesser extent France—should send them back now, in accordance with the spirit of Article 31 of the Austrian Treaty. M. Molotov refused to discuss this question.