

value to have on record the few changes that have been made since the last session in the transfer of ministers from one department of the government to another. My colleague, the Right Hon. Mr. St. Laurent, has resigned his portfolio as Minister of Justice and is now presiding over the Department of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, over which I had had responsibility for more than nineteen years. The Right Hon. Mr. Ilsley, who has been Minister of Finance for many years, has been appointed Minister of Justice in the place of Mr St. Laurent. Hon. Douglas C. Abbott has been appointed Minister of Finance, having resigned the portfolio he held as Minister of National Defence, and the Hon. Brooke Claxton has been appointed Minister of National Defence, navy, army and air included, having resigned the portfolio of Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Hon. Paul Martin has been appointed Minister of National Health and Welfare, having previously held the portfolio of Secretary of State, and the Hon. Colin Gibson has been appointed Secretary of State, having been formerly Minister of National Defence for Air.

PEACE SETTLEMENT WITH GERMANY

QUESTION OF CANADIAN PARTICIPATION—STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Hon. members, I am sure, have been very much interested in the questions which have arisen with respect to Canada's participation in the settlement of peace with Germany, and I believe they will wish to know the position at the earliest moment possible. My colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs has been giving very close attention to all phases of the question since it has come up. With the permission of the house it might be helpful if he were allowed to make a statement immediately. At the conclusion of that statement, unless some other question is raised, I propose to move the adjournment of the house.

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, during recent weeks the government has been giving serious consideration to Canada's participation in the peace settlement with Germany. The immediate question under discussion has been our response to an invitation from the special deputies of the council of

foreign ministers to appear before that body at their meetings in London, and to make known the views of the Canadian government.

In dealing with this question the government has tried to avoid any action that would either obstruct or delay the work of peace-making. On the contrary, we have put forward our views in what appears to us to be moderate and constructive terms, and we have throughout coupled our expressions of misgivings over the procedure that was suggested, with practicable suggestions for alternative measures.

In the middle of December the government learned that the council of foreign ministers meeting in New York had appointed special deputies to take preliminary steps in regard to the peace settlement with Germany. Our information in this regard indicated that the special deputies would hear the views on the German settlement of allied countries which had actively contributed to the war against Germany, and would also discuss the procedure to be followed subsequently in preparing the treaty with Germany. It appeared to the government that the participation in the German settlement which was contemplated for Canada would not be adequate and might well be even less satisfactory than in the case of the settlement with Italy.

Because of these misgivings consideration was given to alternative procedures by which Canada and other allies could be associated in a more satisfactory manner with the council of foreign ministers in the preparation of the peace settlement. Certain proposals were formulated and discussed informally with the representatives of other governments during December and the early part of January. In these discussions, however, the government was somewhat handicapped by the fact that we had not yet received an invitation to appear before the special deputies nor had we been informed of the methods by which we would be enabled to make known our views.

The actual invitation to present our views on the German settlement to the special deputies was communicated to the Canadian embassy in Washington on Saturday, January 4, slightly more than a week before the day on which we were asked to make our representations in London. In this invitation, the government of Canada was asked to communicate in writing at its earliest convenience to the deputies for Germany its views on those aspects of the German problem which were of interest to it. The special deputies undertook to study these views and to submit them to the council of foreign ministers at its next meeting.