

indeed paragraph (c) of both the United States and Belgium draft proposals recognize.

If these efforts fail, it will then be for the Security Council to consider what action should be taken in regard to the questions raised in the first part of the United States proposal.

In their consultations provided for in paragraph (c) of the United States and Belgian draft proposals the permanent members should also consider what other measures the Council might take in regard to the implementation of the Assembly Resolution and the maintenance of international peace and security in Palestine.

SUPPORTS BELGIAN AMENDMENT

Holding these views, the Canadian delegation will support the Belgian amendment as we believe that acceptance of the first paragraph of the United States draft should be postponed until the five permanent members have had an opportunity to consult one another and the

parties directly concerned, and in particular to satisfy themselves and us that the possibilities of progress through conciliation have been exhausted.

The events in the last five months have underlined the necessity of an agreed solution, if bloodshed and strife are to be halted and peace and security established.

May I add, Mr. President, that the position taken by Canada is not to be interpreted as in any way repudiating or abandoning the recommendations of the General Assembly on partition with economic union. This is a matter on which the Council should not, in our opinion, take a decision until the Committee of the five permanent members have had a further opportunity to investigate, consult and report. At the stage which we have now reached this Committee should have the freest possible hand in this vitally important work, and should not be restricted by any prior decision of the Council.

GOVERNMENT AND POLISH ART TREASURES

MR. ST. LAURENT'S STATEMENT IN COMMONS:

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. St. Laurent, in the House of Commons, yesterday (March 4), made the following statement on the Polish art treasures:

In view of the many references recently made in the press to certain art treasures which were brought to Canada by the Polish authorities in 1940 and in order that there may be no misapprehension about the position of the Canadian Government, I think I should give the House a rather full account of the circumstances.

On July 11, 1940, the Consul-General of Poland, Mr. Victor Podoski, informed the Secretary of State for External Affairs that the Polish ship Batory was en route to Canada carrying Polish national art treasures from the Wawel Royal Castle in Cracow. He requested that arrangements be made to permit the entry, free of customs inspection, of these articles, as Polish State property. On July 16, 1940, the Secretary of State for External Affairs was informed by the Assistant Commissioner of Customs that free entry of these items had been arranged at Halifax and Ottawa.

NO RESPONSIBILITY ASSUMED

Subsequently, at the request of the Polish Consul-General, the Department of Public Works provided storage space for the treasures in the Records Storage Building at the Central Experimental Farm. These facilities were granted to the Polish authorities on the clear understanding that the Canadian Government assumed no responsibility for the safekeeping of these articles. No inventory of the treasures was given to the Canadian Government. From the time that the treasures were deposited

the representatives in Canada of the Polish Government had sole access to the room where the treasures were stored, and they alone were responsible for the safekeeping of this property.

In 1945, after the retreat of the German Armies, a new government was established in Poland. This government was unconditionally recognized by the Government of Canada on July 16, 1945, on which date recognition was automatically withdrawn from the Polish Government-in-exile which had its headquarters in London.

PARTS OF TREASURE DISPersed

On May 16 and again on May 18, 1946, a representative of the Legation of the newly recognized Government of Poland called on the Department of External Affairs and stated that not all the Polish treasures were in the room which had been made available for the use of the Polish authorities at the Central Experimental Farm but that parts had been dispersed to various places in Canada. This was the first indication to officials of the Canadian Government that some of the treasures had been removed from the Records Storage Building, presumably by the Polish officials originally in charge of these articles.

On June 21, 1946, the Polish Legation in Ottawa informed the Department of External Affairs stating that, in the spring of 1945, a large part of the Polish art treasures which had been stored in the Records Storage Building at the Central Experimental Farm had been removed to certain places in Ottawa and in the country, and requesting the Department of External Affairs to protect these treasures.

The attitude of the Department of External Affairs was fully set forth in a reply sent to

the Polish Minister in Canada, on August 2, 1946. It was pointed out that, while a place of storage had been provided for these treasures, the Canadian Government had not accepted responsibility for their safekeeping, and that, from the original date of storage until May 1946, officials of the Government of Canada had had no access to them. The Polish Minister was also advised that, after information had been received that some of the treasures had been removed, a new lock had been placed on the door of the storage room at the Public Records Building where the treasures had been placed, and that since that time access to the room had been permitted to no one but Canadian officials. As a courtesy to the Polish Legation in Canada, and without accepting responsibility in the matter, the Department of External Affairs had communicated with various companies and institutions where, according to an officer of the Polish Legation, certain of the Polish art treasures had been stored. As a result of these enquiries the Bank of Montreal stated that it was holding in safekeeping two locked steamer trunks which, it was understood, contained property of the Polish State. Other enquiries failed to reveal the location of other missing articles. In this note it was also suggested to the Polish Minister that he should arrange as soon as possible to remove those art treasures still stored in the Records Storage Building.

On November 12, 1946, the Polish Minister called on the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs and asked for the help of the Canadian Government in locating the missing treasures. The Polish Minister stated that he had been unable to obtain any information from the institutions in Canada to which the articles had been removed, concerning their location. On this occasion it was again pointed out to the Polish Minister that the only connection the Canadian Government had had with the storage of the Polish art treasures was that the Department of Public Works had made a room available to the representative of the Polish Government and had handed over to him the keys of that room. At no time prior to the arrival of the representatives of the new Polish Government, did the Canadian authorities have an inventory of the art treasures and at no time had the Canadian Government undertaken their safekeeping.

POLISH MINISTER REQUESTS ASSISTANCE

On November 13, 1946, the Polish Minister, in a note to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, gave detailed lists of the treasures, part of which it was stated had disappeared from a Monastery at Ste. Anne de Beaupre, and another part of which had disappeared from a Convent in Ottawa. In the note the Polish Minister again requested the assistance of the Canadian Government in locating the missing works of art.

Following the receipt of this note, the Department of External Affairs made further

enquiries in an attempt to learn where the missing treasures were located, but without success.

On December 16, 1946, a lawyer who had been consulted by persons having possession of the missing articles called on the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs. He suggested that an arrangement might be made by which the property in question could be restored to the Polish State by agreement at the end of a five year period. In the meantime the treasures would be placed on public exhibition throughout Canada. He proposed also that as a gesture of goodwill between the people of Canada and the people of Poland the Canadian Government might arrange with the Polish authorities for an exhibition of Canadian art in the cities of Poland during the period that the Polish treasures were on display in Canada. It was further suggested that certain articles included in the collection of Polish treasures which it was claimed were the property of individuals, churches, and other institutions, should, at the end of the five year period, be returned to their beneficial owners. Officials of the Department of External Affairs stated that the Department could not recognize any other than the present Polish Government as entitled to property brought here as belonging to the Polish State, but nevertheless they undertook to explore with this lawyer the terms upon which agreement might be reached and the Polish Legation in Ottawa was informed of this development. Eventually, after prolonged discussions concerning which the Polish Legation was fully informed, a proposal was submitted informally to the Polish authorities for their consideration. According to the terms of this proposal the Canadian Government would have accepted custody of the art treasures for a period of five years, defraying during that time the costs of insurance, maintenance and transportation.

POLISH GOVERNMENT REJECTS OFFER

The Canadian authorities had no particular desire to accept custody of the treasures, nor to bear the expenses involved in holding them for a period of five years. They offered to do so only because this appeared to be a necessary condition of securing an agreement whereby the treasures might be restored to the Polish Government without further dispute. It was hoped that the Government's willingness to accept these responsibilities would be regarded by the Polish Government as an evidence of the good intentions of the Canadian authorities and of their desire to assist in settling the matter.

The Polish Government rejected this basis of settlement as, of course, it was fully entitled to do. No Canadian official at any time suggested that the Polish Government should choose to settle this question by agreement if it would prefer to seek a solution otherwise. The Charge d'Affaires of the Polish Legation subsequently addressed a further note