

Army; employment of Canadian troops in South-east Europe

22. The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs read a telegram from the U.K. government in answer to the message sent, following the meeting of November 9th, with regard to the employment of Canadians in temporary occupation duty.

The U.K. government noted the Canadian desire to have Canadian forces united within the First Canadian Army at the earliest opportunity, but pointed out the impossibility of such a move, at this stage, for reasons of transport and the resulting weakening of Allied forces in the Mediterranean.

The U.K. government expressed appreciation of the government's consent to the employment of Canadians for temporary occupational duty in Austria and Northeast Italy and noted the desire that Canadian forces be repatriated "pari passu" with U.S. forces. Every effort would be made to meet this wish, when the time came, consistent with operational requirements which, it was pointed out, must be over-riding.

(Telegram No.207, Dominions Office to External Affairs, Nov.29, 1944).

23. The Minister of National Defence read a message from Lieutenant-General Montague, reporting a conversation which Major-General Weeks had had with Field Marshal Alexander prior to the former's departure from the Mediterranean theatre.

This indicated the likelihood of the Canadian Corps' being in rest and training for January and February and the possibility of their employment, subsequently, in an amphibious operation against the Dalmation Coast.

It was not clear whether or not the Corps Commander in Italy possessed under his instructions authority for movement of the Corps for such an operation and a copy of Lieutenant-General Foulkes' instructions had been requested from Canadian Military Headquarters, London. The position would be reviewed when these had been received.

24. The Prime Minister stated that it should be quite clear that Canadians could not be employed in such an operation or, indeed, despatched from Italy without the government's approval.

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