

77. Le Premier ministre par intérim au Premier ministre

TELEGRAM P. 243

Ottawa, March 18, 1919

From White. Your X.155.¹ In circumstances mentioned Canada should hold all enemy alien property in Dominion until her claims for reparation paid in full. Am strongly opposed to pooling our enemy property with allies except as to surplus after our claims paid fully.

78. Le Premier ministre par intérim au Premier ministre

TELEGRAM P. 245

Ottawa, March 18, 1919

From Enemy Debts Committee; approved by Secretary of State and White. Your X.148.² Returns to date show debts from persons in enemy countries to Canadians, \$775,000; Canadian property in enemy countries, \$750,000; and Canadian claims against enemy Governments for illegal warfare as made, \$30,000,000, of which last good many are of doubtful validity. Debts from Canadians to persons in enemy countries, \$1,660,000, and enemy property in Canada, \$38,000,000. Last figure approximate but believed conservative. Balance in Canadian hands is thus about \$8,000,000, and Canadian claims appear amply secured. Pending complete returns, Council has not communicated to British Government any conclusion as to any British scheme for settlement of enemy debts and claims. Not clear whether scheme mentioned in cable is that of British Enemy Debts Committee reports of April 4, 1917, and January 23, 1918, or that of British-Belgian-French Conference at Paris October 9, 1917. Understand United States has larger favourable balance proportionately than Canada, but that heavy adverse balance in Britain and France. Council considers Canada should not join in general use of enemy property for common benefit either of British Empire or Allied countries if result would be loss of benefit of any part of security she holds. Application for benefit of British Empire or other Allied countries of surplus enemy property in Canada after payment of all Canadian claims in full would involve no material loss to Canadians, but may be open to objection as confiscation of private enemy property. In view of small amount of commercial debts and claims between Canadians and enemies probable machinery and expense involved in practical working out of British Enemy Debts Committee scheme should be discussed with British authorities before Canada commits herself to it. It should also be ascertained exactly what use of private enemy property is contemplated by various proposals made. Canada should avoid any confiscation or unfair dealing.

¹ Document n° 75.

² Document n° 70.