

that in the settlement of the European situation. We sent in the document which I communicated to this house on the 30th of January. We got no answer to that document but we received an invitation to appear before the deputies. We instructed the high commissioner to ask the deputies if they could give us any assurance that if we complied with their invitation their principals would not regard that as satisfying us as to our participation in the making of the peace. They replied: Under our instructions we can give no assurances. We had preliminary views about what the settlement should be and as we did not want to appear before the deputies, we sent in a statement of our views with a covering letter saying: We understand that by sending these views to you we are not prejudicing our right to be further associated in the preparation of the settlement.

Mr. COLDWELL: Was any attempt made to get in touch with the other nations who were in much the same position as ours, particularly other members of the British commonwealth like Australia?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: Our high commissioner in London was in constant communication with the representatives of the other dominions and with the representatives of other allied nations, and we were informed by him of the communications passing between him and the high commissioners of the other dominions and the representatives of the other allied nations.

Mr. COLDWELL: Was there any suggestion of joint action being taken?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: No, there was no question raised of any joint action to be taken by the allied nations. Each one made his own position known in that regard.

Mr. GRAYDON: I know we are not in committee, but as a matter of information will the minister tell us what was the main objection that Canada took to appearing before the deputies?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: We had no objection to giving information to the deputies, but we did have objection to doing anything from which it might be argued afterwards that we had had our measure of participation in the preparation of the settlement, and we were not going to consider that going before these deputies was giving us the measure of participation to which our part in the war entitled us. And it was that question which our high commissioner submitted to the deputies when they sent him this invitation: what assurance can you give us that our complying with your

invitation will not be considered as giving us the opportunity we feel we are entitled to in the preparation of the settlement? When we got no assurance in that regard we preferred not to appear, but merely to send this statement of our views with a covering letter that they were preliminary views, and that the sending of them did not satisfy us that it was giving us our proper participation in the preparation of the settlement.

It would have been desirable for the deputies to agree on some recommendation to make to their principals. They did not agree. I think I should perhaps give a little more connected account of what has taken place since I made the statement to the house on January 30. We had what we thought were constructive suggestions for the improvement of procedure in the early stages of the preparation for the settlement, and we also made available to the special deputies in London the general statement of Canada's views on the German problem. Since that time a similar, though a much briefer statement, has been sent in on the Austrian settlement.

I should now like to repeat what I said previously concerning the attitude of the government with respect to this problem. Throughout these discussions we have sought to take a constructive approach. We have no wish to delay or impede the conclusion of a peace settlement, nor have we at any time permitted mere considerations of prestige to influence our action. We have everything to gain and nothing to lose by a speedy settlement of the European situation; and we realize that unless the four European and American powers can agree, there will not be any settlement. It is not something which can be done by a majority; it has to be something which each one will sign. It is much like the decisions of the security council, anyone can prevent it from being made, at least as far as he is concerned by refusing to sign it. But it seemed to us a sound and democratic principle that political relations among the nations are best conducted when responsibility is shared, not necessarily on a basis of equality, but as widely as possible among those whose interests are affected. It is simply because we believe in those principles that we have sought to indicate ways in which the settlement of Europe might be brought about with greater expedition and better chance of permanence if it did not appear to be a settlement dictated only by the great powers.

During the meetings in London of the special deputies concerning Germany they had before them a number of proposals as to methods to associate the allies in the prepara-