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Big Four Conference

THE REPLY of the three Western Powers to the Soviet note proposing a meeting of a Council of Foreign Ministers has opened the door wide to very sweeping possibilities.

And a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers would seem to provide the most hopeful channel for peace at the moment. But it remains, of course, to be seen whether the Soviet government will accept the idea of a meeting "to seek a peaceful solution of existing issues."

The Soviet note, to which the three powers are now replying, proposed "the convening of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Britain and France to examine the fulfilment of the Potsdam Agreement on the demilitarization of Germany."

That was at once regarded very naturally in London, Washington and Paris as too restricted a scope for such a conference in present world conditions.

"Demilitarization" is only one facet of the German problem; the German problem is only one facet of a world problem. To discuss the "demilitarization of Germany" in isolation, out of its world context, would seem somewhat unreal; nor would it seem likely to lead to any result.

It seems indeed that the Soviet proposal was not intended very seriously, that it was made on the assumption and in the expectation that it would be rejected.

The Russian proposal as it stands has been declined. But at the same time it did seem to afford just a chance, if a slender one, of a wider and possibly more fruitful consultation.

Moscow seemed at any rate willing to talk. No opportunity, even though slight, of which British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin has called "a sincere attempt to achieve, through negotiation, the removal of the underlying causes of world tension," could be neglected. A decision was quickly taken that the reply should not be a blank negative but alternative proposal giving more opportunity for really valuable results.

To quote Bevin again, the three powers "are ready to take part in any properly prepared four-power meeting which offers the genuine prospect of putting an end to the existing state of tension, and of bringing about lasting friendship between the free world and the U.S.S.R."

That is the essence of the three-power replies. We have now to see what response the Soviet government will make to such an offer.

EASY WITH CONTROLS

IN ITS APPROACH toward mobilization of our industrial resources, Ottawa is reported as still favoring moderation and caution in rushing into drastic regimentation and government control.

Sober-minded citizens with memories of the last war still fresh will approve this realistic attitude. They will realize, of course, that Canadians are not altogether their own masters in this matter. To put it bluntly, we are too small and too close to the United States to be able to set our own gait, even if we wanted to. Broadly speaking, whatever Uncle Sam decides to do in channeling production into defence, we have little choice but to follow. We can only hope, therefore, that sober counsel prevails at Washington as well as at Ottawa.

Putting our whole economy into a straitjacket, with manpower, supplies, prices and wages, and almost everything else rigidly controlled, is not a move to be undertaken lightly. As we discovered 10 years ago, it means a revolutionary upset for the nation, socially and industrially, and it only worked reasonably satisfactorily because the people were aroused by and actually engaged in a full-scale war. And, as we discovered five years later, once fastened on, it takes a long time to get rid of the shackles of state control. Moreover, as we also discovered after the war, control so far as prices are concerned does not prevent increases—it merely postpones them.

The difficulties of a period such as this of twilight mobilization are truly immense. But until it's a decision of total effort for total war, let's go easy. To move too fast in this grim business can be just as grave as too late.—Financial Post.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE FOR TODAY

"Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."—James 1:19-20.



As I See It

By ELMORE PHILPOTT

HOSPITALS—NOW

MY WIFE has just come home after an operation in the hospital. She was one of the lucky ones.

She got in, after only a couple of weeks of waiting, and only two last-minute postponements due to "lack of beds." When she did get in, she got fine treatment—the best ever, she says.

Until I had a chance to hear and see for myself what goes on in a big Vancouver hospital I thought vaguely that the newspaper complaints about lack of beds were probably exaggerated.

Brother, did I get an eye-opener! Far from being exaggerated, the Vancouver scarcity of beds is so acute that it is a disgrace right now.

In the event of war—God help us. No one else will be able to do even with a bed.

SUPPOSE A MOSCOW paper wanted to print a blast at the decadent democracies. Suppose it took a simple thing like hospital beds in the rich, progressive city of Vancouver, British Columbia. It would not need to hire any glib liars or truth-twisters. All it would need to do would be to report the grim facts.

Here are some: Doctors in Vancouver get up at the crack of dawn—but not what you might expect, to start visiting their patients.

No, no. They get up to hustle down to the hospital to queue up for their chance to beg to get one or more patients into hospital. Some of the most skilled doctors in the country spend hours on end doing nothing but sitting in line waiting their turn to ask to get a patient into hospital.

Of course, everybody in B.C. is SUPPOSED to have the right to hospital treatment—paid for by the compulsory hospital insurance scheme. But the fact is that many sick people who require hospital attention are refused such because there simply are not enough beds to fill the need.

MOREOVER, although the public pays the shot for the hospital upkeep, the hospital authorities themselves retain the right to pick and choose among the doctors. Those on the hospital staff list get their patients in. Those not on the staff list do not.

Here is now the bed scarcity works: A patient may be perfectly satisfied with the professional ability of his or her doctor. But the patient needs to get into hospital. That family doctor is not on the "inside track" with the hospital—which is privately managed. So to get into hospital at all the patient is compelled to switch to some other doctor who has the preferred connections to get patients into the institution in question.

PROMINENT Vancouver citizens, whose names are known from coast to coast, have recently been compelled to go to other cities to have major operations because their own doctors in their own city were unable to arrange hospital accommodation. And on top of this comes the plain warning from Major General Worthington that Vancouver needs three times the present number of beds as a precaution for another war.

GRANTED that we live in crazy times. But was anything more insane than for Ottawa to appoint General Worthington head of the Canadian Civil Defence program but with no real power to act?

The question of who is to pay for the tripling of the hospital accommodation has not even been faced by the St. Laurent government—much less decided.

Meanwhile the responsibility for getting enough beds to look after the peacetime needs of the people of B.C. rests with the government of B.C.

Compared with this aggregation of sound-sleepers Rip Van Winkle was a chronic insomniac.

Third Cease Fire Message

NEW YORK—A third message was sent by the United Nations cease-fire committee to the Chinese Communist government yesterday at Peking, seeking an end of the war in Korea. The two previous notes went unanswered.

1950 Sees Canada Important Factor In United Nations Body

By NORMAN ALTSTEDTER Canadian Press Staff Writer

LAKE SUCCESS, N.Y. (CP)—The impact of Canada's role on world affairs as expressed through the United Nations continued to grow in strength during 1950. As the year drew to a close, L. B. Pearson, Canada's external affairs minister, was appointed to a three-man UN committee, set up to seek mediation of the Korean war.

The choice of Pearson to the important committee indicated the stature He and Canada have attained among the leaders of the 60 nations which make up the world organization.

Canada took another leading role in the Korean problem by setting up a special force for service with the United Nations in Korea or elsewhere. In this move, Canada led the way in plans for formation of an international army to fight aggression wherever it may occur.

The start of 1950 saw Gen. A. G. L. McNaughton, who headed the Dominion's U.N. delegation during its two years on the U.N. Security Council, return to duties in Canada. The end of Canada's security council term also marked the beginning of another term for Canada as a member of the Economic and Social Council.

R. G. (Gerry) Riddell, 42, formerly Pearson's special assistant, arrived at Lake Success in August to take over as Chief of Canada's permanent delegation. John Holmes of the External Affairs Department, had worked as acting head of the delegation until that time.

ON U.N. SECRETARIAT During the year two Canadians were appointed to important posts on the U.N. Secretariat. Dr. Hugh L. Keenleyside, formerly Canada's Deputy Minister of Resources, and Maj. Gen. Howard Kennedy, former Quartermaster-General in the Canadian Army, became top-ranking International Civil Servants.

Keenleyside, 51, was appointed head of the U.N.'s Technical Assistance Administration—A brand new post. The T.A.A. was set up as an outgrowth of President Truman's "point four" program of aid to under-developed countries. In its final form, the T.A.A. is to help two-thirds of the world lift itself from backward methods of industry, agriculture and health, among other aspects of life. For a beginning, U.N. members pledged \$20,800,000 to the project.

Kennedy, a 57-year-old forestry specialist, arrived in the Middle East last April as director of a \$53,000,000 U.N. relief and works program for Arab refugees of the Arab-Israeli war. Besides co-ordinating the direct relief and works programs to help the refugees, Kennedy had the diplomatic task of conferring with governments on the projects.

With the opening of the U.N. General Assembly Session Sept. 19, a large Canadian delegation headed by Pearson, arrived in New York. For the first time in three years members of the opposition party in Canada's parliament were among members of the delegation.

In his main policy speech at the session's opening, Pearson called for a "two-year moratorium on bellicose and violent speeches at the United Nations" and a two-year attempt to do something effective "about peace."

But by Dec 15 when the assembly officially ended, the outlook for peace was dim, with Russia failing to accept the U.N. majority's initial efforts to mediate the Korean war.

Lingering hopes were held that Pearson, along with India's Sir Benegal Rau and Iran's Nazrolah Entezam, could find a way to avert a major conflict between Communist China and the United Nations.

Expects Russia To Strike Soon

WASHINGTON D. C.—Former Secretary for War Robert Patterson predicted last night that Soviet Russia would strike directly against the western nations with all the strength at her command by next year.

CLEAN STANDARD HEATING OILS A STANDARD OF B.C. PRODUCT

Protesting at Freight Boost

OTTAWA—There was a wave of protest from the provinces yesterday at the announcement of the railways that they were seeking a new five percent increase in freight rates following the granting of wage increases by the federal arbitrator.

Premier Smallwood of Newfoundland, Premier T. C. Douglas and Premier E. C. Manning of Alberta were among those who protested.

Hon. Henry Bosman, minister of agriculture for British Columbia, said a further increase in rates would act as an embargo on exports from his province.

Dr. H. M. Daggett arrived in the city on Wednesday's plane from Vancouver to spend the Christmas and New Year season with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Daggett.

Conditions required on long power lines. Points such as Vanderhoof, McBride, Burns Lake, Endako, Quesnel and others could easily be supplied with power in addition to Prince George. Many of these settlements already are already receiving power from the B.C. Power Commission's diesel units.

An announcement concerning the government's projected interior power project is expected shortly.

WORLD-FAMED John Begg The Superior Scotch

Wishing You A Merry Christmas .. Reddy

NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA POWER COMPANY LIMITED

BROADWAY CAFE Western Foods Best Food Finest Cooking

CLEAN STANDARD HEATING OILS A STANDARD OF B.C. PRODUCT

With Best Wishes for Christmas ORMES DRUGS

Christmas in Comfort! Give HIM a Gift He will Appreciate

McCLARY Washing Machine

WALLACE Pharmacy

LIGHT THE WAY TO A Merry Christmas WITH Lamps