

FROM BEHIND THE CURTAINS ON PARLIAMENT HILL

CKRD - JUNE 20-64

"ON ASSIGNMENT TO GERMANY AND FRANCE"

This week our behind the curtain story is really from beyond the curtains, far from the hallowed halls of Parliament. While Parliament has been occupied in prolonged controversy over Farm Credit and the Flag, your Member of Parliament has been part of a delegation to an international conference in Germany. There were eight M.P.'s and Senators in the Canadian delegation, headed by the Minister of National Defence, the Hon. Paul Hellyer. The conference was the 7th World Conference of the International Council for Christian Leadership, at which there were delegations from some 40 countries in the free world - from five continents. These conferences are not intended to make decisions but to discuss in depth fundamental national and world problems in light of Christian truth. This year's topics included "Truth in an Age of Propaganda", with the first paper given by Canada's Minister of Defence. It was my privilege to lead the discussion on this topic - which was translated simultaneously into German, French and English. The second part of the conference dealt with "The Liberty of Man in an Age of Change", with the Minister of Defence from Holland taking the lead.

The President of the conference was the former French Minister of Justice. The Chairman of the conference proceedings was a Member of the German Bundestag or Parliament formerly from East Russia. The Foreign Minister of Togo was there, as well as the Chief Justice from Nigeria. A senior Naval Officer from Sweden, a Finnish Industrialist, an Italian Professor, a senior government official from Viet Nam, the ex-President of Honduras, a business executive from Brazil, and a Bishop from India were among the delegates - some 350 in all. The American delegation was headed by a retired Army General, as the Senators and Congressman originally on the delegation were dropped because of the critical Civil Rights debate in Congress. Group discussions and unscheduled talks perhaps provided the greatest benefits from the conference, as men and women, dedicated to the truths and principles of Christianity, struggled to clarify the answers to many of the world's great problems. One delegate from Basutoland, a country deep within the confines of South Africa and soon to gain independent status from British colonial rule, broke into tears as he described the struggle for freedom and truth now taking place in Africa. At this point the translator stepped in, giving him time to regain his composure. Another critical point came when a delegate from Uruguay questioned the truth of

a statement made by a delegate from Brazil who had said that the recent military overthrow of the socialistic Goulart Government in Brazil was a victory of Christianity over Communism - again Christian tolerance and the interpreter saved the day.

Some of the questions posed at the conference were:

"What is Truth?"

"How much truth can a man bear-do we really welcome truth?"

"Can truth be accommodated in politics and economics for purely ethical motives?"

"Can deception be tolerated in propaganda in time of peace or war?"

A Norwegian delegate asked, "What about the truthfulness of a patriot who deceived the enemy to save the lives of 44 hostages?" A Dutch theologian posed the question "How can I become true?" From this followed such statements as "Truth never occurs in a vacuum - Truthfulness is not a possession but rather a procedure - Truth becomes relative only when facts or truth are related to someone else."

The final conference day included a floating session on board a river steamer on a hundred-mile trip down the historic Rhine.

Such a conference, while a most pleasant break, can scarcely be called a holiday. Sessions began at 9 A.M. each morning and it was usually after midnight before the last decisions broke off. In addition to the scheduled conference meetings, I conferred with officials of the Canadian Embassy in nearby Bonn and with diplomats from some of the African countries. The actual conference sessions took place in Bad Godesberg in the same hotel in which Neville Chamberlain met Hitler in 1938. Chamberlain and his party were housed at that time in the St. Petersburg Hotel, high on a mountain overlooking Bonn and Cologne. It is in this same hotel that Queen Elizabeth will stay when she visits Germany next May.

The RCAF met us in Cologne on Sunday night and flew the delegation to Marville, France, which is the Headquarters of No. 1 Fighter Wing of the RCAF in Europe. The following day I journeyed to Metz, the Headquarters of Canada's NATO forces. Here I met Dr. Frank Patten, formerly Superintendent of Ottawa Schools, once a senior part of our educational establishment in Ethiopia and now Director of Education for Canada's NATO forces in Europe. Few Canadians realize the extent of this school program. Here are a few statistics.

There are some 7,500 Canadian children of school age in Europe. More than 400 Canadian teachers are required to staff the 20 schools, of which 7 are



high schools. These schools are located in Germany and North West France.

On our return trip on Tuesday from Marville to Ottawa via an RCAF Yukon, 35 of the 134 passengers on board were children, 13 of them babes in arms. Other passengers included an Army General, a Naval Captain, half a dozen senior Air Force Officers, and last but not least 37 wives of military personnel returning with their families after three and four years of living in Europe. The return flight took 12 hours. When the aircraft left France it weighed 202,000 pounds and contained 10,000 gallons of jet fuel.

After such an experience as one has had these past 6 days, one wonders at the futility of war and if there can ever be hope of peace. In an underground fortress of world war I near Verdun, we saw an accumulation of what is estimated to be 130,000 skeletons. Nearby was a cemetery with 120,000 military graves - all that is left, except for an occasional memory, of a quarter million German and Allied World War I soldiers - all killed in the Verdun-Metz area alone.

One of the bright spots of my experience during these days has been to learn of the high regard in which our Canadian military and civilian personnel is held by the local people. After 12 years of service in both France and Germany, the Canadians are more popular than ever. Coming back into the smoke and battle of Parliament, one but wishes that our politicians could be as efficient and effective at their jobs as our military personnel are at theirs.