

Special
Interview with Dr. Leon Fraser:

Saw Leon Fraser by appointment at his office, 46 Cedar. He is on a month's vacation from ^{the B.L.S.} of which he is, I think, the active manager. I called him Dr. Fraser at which he laughed. Said he had not been called Dr. since he left Columbia where he once taught. I told him I wanted to get his appraisal of O.D.Y.'s work on the Dawes and Young Committees, knowing that he was connected with both.

He answered that he saw almost nothing of Young on the Dawes Committee. He was far down the line - legal counsellor for Logan, now dead, but that the Conference Committee had not been long in session before it began to be obvious that Young was playing a large and useful part. It is ^{his} personal charm, which, as Fraser says, he uses freely, had won the delegates - then his spirit of accomodation - willingness to listen to everybody - the fact that he did not come with a solution. He says that Young's method, particularly as it came out in the Young Conference was to begin by laying down some large principle, something that everybody could consent to, like bringing them to consent that the Conference must end in an arrangement.

When an individual announced something which was plainly contrary to a general principle to which they had all agreed than Young would gently remind him that this was ^{meant} through that they could not go on towards their objective, if any of them held to positions which were plainly contradictory to that objective. He thinks a good deal of his power was the fact that he was always

sympathetic and understanding of the position of each man - that he did not begin by saying, "Well, that's clearly impossible. You never can have that or I don't believe in that, etc., etc." But rather by saying, "I understand how you feel. I see your point of view."

This winning a man's feeling that Young was not an antagonist but a friend. He says the French felt that Young was too sympathetic with the Germans, that if he had been more positive ~~upon bonds~~ with them that the Conference of '29 might have ended three or four weeks before it did. But Young's idea, according to Fraser, was not to force anybody but to bring people to consent so that the whole end might be *friendly* which of course ^{was} what he succeeded in doing.

On the Dawes Commission, Young handled the press with great effect. Contrary to the usual custom he saw them two or three times a week and told them what the Conference was trying to do but cautioned them that they might ruin everything if they breathed a word before he gave permission. Told them that what he wanted was that they might have the inclination to guide them. (See interview - notes taken in Arizona.)

Says that in Paris he received every night complete reports of what the American newspapers had published. (See interview with Case) If he found that anyone of the papers had broken its agreement with him he immediately summoned the sinner.

In Paris Lamont handled the press. (See Young interview on this.) Thinks that the English and German frequently gave interviews or information to their correspondent which enabled the papers to announce that so and so was to be done, thus giving the delegates the backing of what he wanted done. Says, as so many others have, that in a Conference he would listen to each man and when the terms were all in would collect, or rather crystalize into a statement which all would accept.

Speaks of his sensitiveness, thinks that the strongest thing about him is his emotions - that he feels antagonism, criticism, and in a Conference would steer clear of a dangerous point before anybody had expressed it. Thinks that here is his superiority over the most of us - a superior emotional sensitiveness - interested to see that this is about the ^{conclusion} that I was coming to. I say, however, that there must have been a keen intellect to be able to gather from a group of opinions of a council ^{table} the essential points and to focus them so that he was ready with something at the end of a Confernece. Fraser says, "Of course that is true. That his feeling what a man meant, feeling his attitude was more in him than intellect.

He speaks with strong approval of the backing that Young had from Morgan and Lamont, particularly Morgan. He says that from the start they did not lose an opportunity to recognize him as Chairman - that it was natural *for Perkins - and his friend* but not so natural that Lamont or Morgan should have done so. Thinks Morgan made a great

contribution. See Young's remarks on this in speech ^{after} the Conference. In trying to get an appraisal of Young's part in the two plans ^{of the Dawes Plan} he says that from 50 to 60 percent was due to Young - say 50% he says - 30% to Stampf, the Englishmen and the rest to scattered sources.

In the Young Plan it was different ^{more} - difficult groups because the Germans were in it, as they had not been at the time of the Dawes Plan. He was ~~less~~ responsible as he had not been before. If he failed it was a disaster for him; in spite of a backing when there came a crisis he had to handle it. The most important work, he says, was not done in the general conferences, but in the meetings with this or that man. - Moreau, Schacht - ~~Schacht~~, Pirelli, etc. It was there that he could talk out things with representatives of the different nations.

He frequently would propose, when it came to figures, something that he thought impossible himself, but it would provoke discussion. Gradually they would ^{come} down for naturally the Germans were trying to get off with as little and the allies get as much as was possible.

I asked him about languages. He says that of course it was a handicap, particularly in the private conferences, that he and Moreau had great difficulty in getting exact understanding, as he spoke no French and Moreau no English.

(See Interview with Young on this matter of languages.)

I asked him if he thought that the fact that Mr. Young knew nothing whatever, when he went to Paris the first time, about Reparations was a handicap. He said on the contrary. That nearly everyone went with some *fixed* idea of what should be done. And the result was that you had a group of people each with a hard and fast plan - *for which each fought* - no give to it. Young had no plan.

Speaks of his kindness and consideration for the Americans in the Conference. Says that every Saturday night he gave a party to all of the American group - dinner and dance. That it was customary for him to consider others.

Says that the burden on him was almost unendurable at times. Recalls that one Friday night he went to his room at his Hotel, utterly exhausted, and until the next Monday morning did not rise. Says that at times everyone was very anxious about him, particularly in the crisis when it looked as if the Conference must go to pieces as it did at ~~difference~~ times.

He had gone with his friend

Characteristics *Fraser*

Says that Young's sympathies are always at the start with the under dog. That was his attitude at both Commissions towards the Germans. This is his method in all negotiations as near as I can make out. The weaker party - what must we have to survive. The principle being that he must be allowed to survive which perhaps the press did not admit ^{in the case} of the Germans.