

Belief Growing Leopold Fails, Is to Abdicate

Brussels, June 22 (AP). — A trusted source close to the Belgian Government said tonight King Leopold's political manoeuvres apparently had failed and that his abdication was likely within a few days.

This informant said Leopold's last hope of forming a Government was Gangshof van der Mersch, chief military prosecutor of Nazi collaborators, to whom the King had offered the Belgian premiership.

Van der Mersch was said to have gone to Salzburg, Austria, where the King is staying, to give his answer. He was said to hold the view that Leopold must renounce his throne for Belgium's best interests.

Paul van Zeeland, one-time Premier and at present High Commissioner for Repatriation, declined to comment on rumors that he might attempt to mediate the crisis. He indicated keen concern and commented simply: "I wish the next few weeks were already past."

The threat of a general strike by left-wing parties opposed to Leopold's return still hung over the political drama being enacted both in Austria, where the monarch was reported conferring with Belgium's Parliamentary leaders, and in this capital of a war-impooverished land.

Grand Marshal in Brussels

Newspapers announced the arrival here of the Grand Marshal of Leopold's court, Count de Ways Raurt, and said he brought a list of "important personalities" the King desired to speak with at Salzburg.

Attacks against Leopold's war record continued in the Belgian press, with the important independent organ, Le Soir, hinting that the King had sponsored a letter by the Belgian Minister in Switzerland, Count Louis D'Ursel, in September, 1940, appealing to other Belgian diplomats abroad to keep the Belgian Congo from supporting the Allied war effort.

The newspaper also printed the text of a reply to D'Ursel by the then Belgian Ambassador in the United States, Georges Theunis, denouncing D'Ursel's scheme.

The Government of Premier Achille van Acker, whose resignation was announced last Saturday, still was functioning, with the Regent, Prince Charles, giving no indication he had accepted van Acker's retirement. The ban on radio broadcasting about the Government crisis, other than official communiques, was being rigidly enforced.

Three leaders who flew to Salzburg today to see the King were believed equipped to give him a realistic picture of the political line-up against him. They were Robert Gillon, Liberal President of the Senate; Frans van Cauwelaert, Catholic President of the Chamber of Deputies, and Van der Mersch, High Commissioner for State Security.

There were no signs that the anti-King coalition of Liberals, Socialists and Communists was breaking up. All sides agreed that Leopold was a man of strong will who had set his heart on coming back to rule. Whether his advisers fully appreciated what risks that might entail was another question.

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