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by 1880 had its own High Commissioner in London, with whom it corresponded in supplement to or extension of the Governor General's channel. The successive Colonial Conferences of Prime Ministers provided, periodically, more direct and personal channels of consultation, and occasionally, even then, correspondence passed directly between the various Prime Ministers. On minor technical matters, Pope and others privately exchanged communications with their opposite numbers in London, Melbourne or elsewhere. At the Imperial Conference in 1911 suggestions were made for the separation of the business of the self-governing dominions from the Colonial Office to a new Dominions Office, that the powers of the High Commissioners should be enhanced, and that the Governor General should be "cut out" of correspondence between the governments.

Imperial Conference 1911.

Sir Joseph Ward, Premier of New Zealand, introduced a resolution, part of which provided "that the High Commissioners should become the sole channel of communication between Imperial and Dominion Governments, - Governors General, and Governors on all occasions being given identical and simultaneous information". Rt. Hon. L. Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies, observed:

We should see very great difficulty about that direct communication, because it cuts across the theory of Ministerial responsibility, and of course you place the Governors General of the Dominions and the Secretary of State here, in a very difficult position, if they were outside the ordinary course of communication between the Governments of the Dominions and the Home Government.

Sir Joseph Ward replied:

Regarding the proposal made for the High Commissioners being the channels of communication, I