

Crewe has told me that this proposal will eventually be made, and in all probability carried. I have put in at once a plea that you should be allowed to initiate this proposal on the ground -

- (1) that it yours originally, and
- (2) that no one could bring it forward with greater effect.

Crewe has promised me that you shall have the place of leadership in this proposal. The difficulties are rather administrative than political. The Prime Minister says he has too much to do. An alternative that has presented itself to the mind of Crewe is that this Department should be presided over by the Lord President of the Council, who might be called, in addition to the title, the Imperial Minister. It is worth considering whether he should be called the Federal Minister, rather than the Imperial Minister.

The advantages appear to me to be in favour of the Prime Minister being the responsible Minister rather than the President of the Council. Asquith's reluctance, probably the result of laziness, must be overcome. The Prime Minister could be represented in the other House by a younger Minister whose duties would include the cultivation of close personal relationships with overseas Ministers and others visiting London.⁽¹⁾

All this urging and prodding by Earl Grey, which leads us to suppose that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was equally keen on the proposal, was, however, unsuccessful, and for some reason Sir Wilfrid did not feel inclined to promote or even support it. We have by implication, Lord Crewe's indication that Laurier never supported such a suggestion at the Colonial Conference of 1907. We have, on the other hand, Earl Grey's repeated assertions that Laurier had advocated it. No further views expressed by Laurier have been found, although Grey states that he had discussed the proposal with Laurier in 1907, in 1908, and in 1909. Laurier's lack of response was attributed by frustrated Grey to Laurier's natural habit of

⁽¹⁾ Laurier Papers. Vol. 735. Gov. Gen's. Correspondence 1910. (Doc. 206961-70).