

Relations with Mr. Murphy

In this review of Pope's discontents in the first few years of his new office, it is perhaps not inappropriate to examine another aspect which may have been a further irritant. This is the question, which is difficult to assess, of Mr. Pope's personal relations with Mr. Charles Murphy. Murphy, as has been stated, was a forceful impetuous Irishman. He was able, and aggressive, and apparently high-tempered; he was also a well-read scholar, an orator, and generally well-disposed toward his colleagues. He had a due respect for Pope's longer experience, seniority of age, and expert knowledge of his area of duties.

Both Charles Murphy, and Joseph Pope after 1878, were Ottawa men; and no doubt were known to one another, the one as an active politician and the other as an official within the inner circles of government. Murphy was nine years younger than Pope. When he became Secretary

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he 'ruled the Colonial Empire'. The easy judgments made by the Colonial Reformers regarding 'Mr. Oversecretary Stephen' must be reassessed, however. A closer study of his work has revealed that Stephen was extremely amenable to direction from his parliamentary superiors and conscientious in seeking their opinion on important colonial issues. The administrative processes of the Colonial Office were complicated, and it naturally took some time for a new Secretary of State to understand them. This meant that in the absence of specific direction, or sometimes in the face of the neglect of Departmental responsibilities by a Minister, Stephen was forced to take decisions. Even when this qualification has been recorded it is still true that Stephen's constructive steps in organizing the work of the Colonial Office make him the prototype of the perfect Under-Secretary and one of the most distinguished figures in the history of British administration in the nineteenth century." (D.M. L.Farr: The Colonial Office and Canada, 1867-1887. pp.30-31).

A study of the early history of the Colonial Office reveals a state of unpopularity and internal problems similar to those experienced in the early history of the Department of External Affairs. (See, for instance, H.L. Hall, The Colonial Office. pp.16-18 and pp.265-266.