

expressing this idea, desired to have a clear distinction drawn between the status of the self-governing and of the Crown Colonies.

"The Colonial Office must expect to see the self-governing communities outgrow its capacity for control, which is not capable of being indefinitely extended.*

"All the departments of this Government would remain—the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade—and matters of inquiry and ordinary communications would go to these departments as a matter of course. What I thought might be attached to the Prime Minister personally were those dispatches which have respect to the exercise of the self-governing functions of self-governing communities, all great constitutional questions or matters involving constitutional questions."†

This revolutionary proposal, it seems, was to be achieved by the establishment of a Secretariat independent of the Colonial Office and presided over by the Prime Minister. As developed by Mr. Deakin and Dr. Jameson, it deserves more than a passing attention. Their avowed aim was the creation of a staff "controlled by the Prime Minister here as representing all the Prime Ministers of the Empire,"‡ to which should be transferred the consideration of all constitutional issues between the British Government and the self-governing Colonies, which at present fall within the province of the Colonial Office. This, if carried through, would have the effect of removing the Secretariat from the authority of a responsible Minister of the British Government, for the Prime Minister would preside as *primus inter pares* on behalf of the body of Premiers forming the Conference.§

Sir W. Laurier took the strongest objection to this proposal, insisting that the Secretariat should be under the control of the Colonial Office. Finally, the refusal of the Prime Minister to accede to the proposal that he should preside decided the issue. But this attempt

* Page 44.

† Page 44.

‡ Page 67.

§ Pages 67 and 68.