

Paris, January 15, 1919

Note n° 2

SOURCE : VOLUME 2, ANNEXE

Memorandum Number 2

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1. This memorandum covers the period from arrival in Paris on the evening of Saturday 11th January to the afternoon of Wednesday the 15th January.
2. Sir Robert Borden was accompanied to France by Mr. Christie, Colonel Biggar, Mr. Dafoe, Major Asselin and Mr. Boyce....
4. On Sunday [January 12] there was an informal conference between representatives of the five Great Powers. Great Britain, France and Italy were represented by their respective Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers or a representative of the Foreign Office; the United States was represented by the President and by the Secretary of State; Japan was represented by the Japanese Ambassador and another delegate. This meeting was held for the purpose of considering proposals with respect to procedure, representation and subjects to be discussed and determined at the approaching Peace Conference. A discussion as to the terms upon which the Armistice should be extended was brought forward and consumed a good deal of time but was eventually referred to the Supreme Allied Council at Versailles. The question of representation was discussed at some length and strong objection was taken on behalf of the United States to the proposed representation of the British Dominions. President Wilson took a somewhat decided stand but spoke with every respect for the Dominions and with much appreciation of their war effort. His objection was based on the view that if Canada and the other Dominions had the same representation as Belgium and the other small Allied nations they would stand in a much better position than Belgium as they would be backed by the British Delegation of five, the most powerful in the Conference as he expressed it. Moreover the result would be to give the British Empire five chief delegates entitled to sit at every meeting of the Conference and twelve delegates from the Dominions, making a representation of seventeen in all. President Wilson was, however, willing to agree that each of the British Dominions should be entitled to one representative whose status should be the same as that of the representatives of Belgium. Secretary Lansing was somewhat arrogant not to say offensive and desired to know why Canada should be concerned in the settlement of European affairs. Mr. Lloyd George replied that they believed themselves to have that right because some hundreds of thousands from the Dominions had died for the vindication of public right in Europe and that Canada as well as Australia had lost more men than the United States in this war. Clemenceau was very sympathetic with the attitude of the Dominions. Lloyd George declined to withdraw his proposal for representation of the Dominions and announced that he would consult the Dominion Ministers on the following day.
5. The foregoing incidents were reported to Sir Robert Borden on Sunday evening and he called a meeting of the Dominion Ministers at 10:15 preparatory to a meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet which was fixed for eleven on Monday morning. At this meeting of the Dominion Ministers it was agreed that they should stand together and insist upon representation equal to that of the smaller Allied nations. It was considered that this was a real test of their status as autonomous nations of the British Commonwealth.
6. At 11 o'clock [January 13] such members of the Imperial War Cabinet as were present in Paris assembled: Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Montagu and the