

804

1 to the S.G.D's, & 2ndly to the Crown Colonies as certain to come in the near future.

It is the next step in the slow but sure growth of our Imperial evolution. Who is to take the step? Who is to give the lead? That is the question which interests me.

On grounds personal to yourself and on public grounds also, I regard it as most desirable that Canada, under your Premiership, should give the lead.

I know that you are in favour of making this move, but that you hesitate to press this matter upon the acceptance of Council, out of regard to Mr. Fielding who is opposed to it. Now I venture to hope that Mr. Fielding's opposition is not founded on any bedrock principle. A slight conversation I had with him in the passage of the Hotel at Albany on the very subject led me to believe that his opposition to the adoption of your suggestion was not based on any strong conviction, but rather on a sentimental affection for things as they are. He appeared to be quite satisfied with the present mix up in the Colonial Office between the Dominions and the Colonies, & not to share the desire that Canada should rise above the status of Colony and dependency!

It certainly was a surprise to find myself as an Imperialist Governor General engaged in an endeavour to plant in His Majesty's Canadian Minister of Finance a proper respect for the dignity & status of Canadian Nationality. I need not repeat what I said in a former letter to you on this subject. Since I wrote on Jan. 10 what appeared only a probability now looks more like a certainty & I am more than ever anxious that the opportunity which is now up to Canada to give the lead as she has so often done before, should not be lost. (1)

In 1910 Earl Grey was on a visit to England, and had talks with Lord Crewe, the Colonial Secretary. From London he wrote to Laurier on June 22nd:

With a view of helping public opinion to appreciate more fully the difference that should exist between Domestic and Imperial Legislatures may I suggest to you once more the desirability of formally presenting to Asquith as a subject for the consideration of the approaching Imperial Conference, your recommendation that the Department relating to the affairs of the Overseas Dominions, should be under a roof of its own, and responsible to a Minister of its own.

(1) Laurier Papers. Vol. 735. Gov. Gen.'s Correspondence 1910. (Doc. 206754-206767).