

the Department that he added to the draft Minute of Council a provision that a duplicate of all despatches should be sent to him.

The despatches sent to the Secretary of State in due time reached me, and such as could not be dealt with direct were by me referred to the several Departments by means of letters to the Deputy Heads, asking the views of his Minister thereon, according to the English practice. In the meantime I studied the subject, digested the departmental replies, and in unimportant matters prepared reports to the Governor-in-Council or the Governor General, as the case might be, for the Secretary of State's signature.

All important subjects of negotiation were however laid by me before the Prime Minister, according to Sir Wilfrid's instructions. He discussed them with me, and when he had decided on a line of action (which might or might not be in accordance with the view of the Department immediately concerned, or perhaps before the despatch had reached that Department) I would, after acquainting that department with the Prime Minister's wishes, prepare a report to be signed - not however by the Prime Minister but by the Secretary of State, whose first knowledge of the subject was thus a cut and dried report set before him to sign. This was naturally embarrassing to me who had two chiefs to deal with. Then again, some of the Ministers or at any rate their Deputies, did not relish the idea of reporting to the Governor-in-Council through, it might be, a junior Minister. Respect for the Prime Minister's well understood wishes gradually overcame this, but had it not been for Sir Wilfrid's support, and also for the fact that the Secretary of State's time was more than occupied by his manifold duties elsewhere, I do not see how we could possibly have got along. These difficulties inherent in the dual headship would disappear if the original design were to prevail, for under the Prime Minister there would be only one head, and that the several departments should report on External Affairs to him is both natural and fitting.

Mr. Borden will observe from the foregoing that since its inception the Department of External Affairs has really been quoad all important questions of foreign policy, as it must necessarily be, under the head of government. What is proposed is merely to give legislative sanction to the actual conditions and thus ensure a more satisfactory administration of the Department besides relieving the Under-Secretary from a position which in the past has been wellnigh intolerable. (1)

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(1) File 666/12