

The Permanent Secretariat, under Mr. Just, was set up in 1907. It was to be a liaison and information office, in the interim between periodic Colonial Conferences. It was set up within the Colonial Office, and under the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Sir Wilfrid Laurier acquiesced in its establishment, as offering some practical benefit. From the above letter, and from the evidence available in the published proceedings of the Colonial Conference of 1907, it would appear that Sir Wilfrid Laurier sought no greater change in the existing arrangement or structure of the Colonial Office.

On the other hand, however, Earl Grey gained the distinct impression that Sir Wilfrid Laurier wished to have the Colonial Office bifurcated into two separate departments. On April 8, 1909, he wrote to Lord Crewe, the Colonial Secretary:

Sir Wilfrid Laurier confided to me on his return from London that in his opinion the policy of two necks to one bottle, under the roof of the Colonial Office, was not sufficient. He favoured two bottles - each bottle in a cellar of its own, with its separate butler. (1)

To Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Grey wrote on January 10, 1910:

You will remember that on your return from the Conference in 1907, in discussing the results of the Conference, you pointed out to me that although the resolution of H.M. Government to make a complete separation of the Departments of the Colonial Office dealing with (1) the Self-Governing Dominions, and (2) the Crown Colonies, Protectorates, Spheres of Influence, etc., was a satisfactory step forward towards the fuller recognition of the autonomy of the Dominions, in your opinion it was desirable that further steps should be taken in this direction, and that the Department of His Majesty's Government dealing with the affairs relating to the self-governing Dominions, should be a separate Department under a roof of its own, and with a Minister of its own. (2)

(1) Ibid. Vol. 15. Folder 32.

(2) Laurier Papers. Vol. 735.