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Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom,
Earncliffe,
OTTAWA

8th March, 1954.

The Right Honourable Arthur Meighen, Q. C.,
Room 1601,
50 King St. W.,
Toronto.

Dear Mr. Meighen:

I have received your letter of the 12th of January and perhaps I had better say briefly, but I hope with proper courtesy, that nothing you have said in this letter has convinced me that your criticism of my remarks has any foundation.

You say -

"it would be interesting if you would advise me just what practical control Canada enjoys today over what you describe as her "foreign policy" in respect of engaging or not engaging in war that she could not have exercised in 1914. At that time, in the apt words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, when Britain was at war, Canada was at war; but Canada had, as between Britain and herself, the absolute right to determine the extent, if any, of her participation. She could stay out entirely if she wished, providing, of course, the enemy permitted. She can do the same today. What is the prohibition by which an enemy is now forbidden to lay war-like hands on a peace-professing Canada that did not bind such enemy in 1914?"

Prior to 1914, if England declared war Canada was at war, irrespective of whether she took any active part in it or not. Today Canada is not at war unless she herself declares war or somebody else declares it upon her. Surely this is a fundamental difference?

I had expected, when I read your disagreement with my statement that there was no consultation with the then Dominion before the declaration of war in 1914, that you would have produced some evidence which would refute that which I had quoted in my previous letter. You say "I know personally that there was" and again "If you think the Government of that day could have been satisfied with such utter lack of consultation you know very little about Canada and still less about Sir Robert Borden. Canadians were not reared in any such submissive atmosphere, and Sir Robert Borden was just not built that way". These are views to which you are, of course, perfectly entitled but I cannot reconcile them with the documentary evidence available.

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