

would have been affected whether the Prime Minister did not head the Department of External Affairs (e. g. Laurier) or did head the Department (e. g. Borden, Bennett and King). Dr. Skelton's statement that "Mr. Laurier determined not to take charge of a department", while literally true, for whatever alleged reason, may be contrasted with a memorandum which Mr. Pope sent to Sir Robert Borden dated December 30, 1911, in which he said: "Sir Wilfrid even in the beginning was so impressed with the necessity for his having supervision over the Department that he added to the draft Minute of Council a provision that a duplicate of all despatches should be sent to him." When the earlier Bill came up for debate in March 1909, the Justice Minister, Honourable A. B. Aylesworth, who had finally drafted it, including the substitution "Secretary of State", admitted that he would have approved the original suggestion. He understood that Mr. Foster "thinks the details of the scheme so far as outlined might be improved upon if a small staff of expert assistants were attached to the First Minister himself. I may say at once that so far as I am concerned that step would meet with my entire approval."⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ House of Commons Debates. Mar. 4, 1909, p. 1994.