

referred to "all the matters of a confidential character alluded to this afternoon, some of which possibly could not be disclosed even to the Cabinet as a whole." (1)

Mr. Haggart protested that "Every confidential report will go to that department." To which Sir Wilfrid replied:

It will be in the discretion of the Governor in Council to say whether any confidential report shall go to the department or not; some may go there and some may not. But the honourable gentleman knows very well that there must be some department to which even confidential despatches must be assigned. (2)

Later he added:

The fact that there will be some confidential despatches which the Prime Minister may have to keep to himself does not weigh very much with me; in fact, in the course of my experience during the last twelve years, there never came to me a despatch which I thought I could not take to Council. On the contrary; upon every occasion that any matter of this kind occurred, I have always thought it preferable to take the whole cabinet into the confidence of the Prime Minister and of His Excellency the Governor General . . .

I do not believe there is anything which should be kept from council, although there might be some things that it would possibly be advisable to keep within the Prime Minister and the Governor General and perhaps one or two of the colleagues of the Prime Minister for the time being. But this matter will not be changed when there is a Department of External Affairs. (3)

The assumption apparently was either that Department officials, as trusted civil servants, were, like Privy Council Clerks, privileged persons permitted to see, when necessary, the most secret documents; or that officials of a Ministerial department were a part of

(1) H. of C. Debates. 1909. p.2002.

(2) H. of C. Debates. Mar.4, 1909. p.1999.

(3) Ibid. pp. 2003-4.