

lement Conseiller de l'Ambassade du Roi à Londres. Le Gouvernement belge serait heureux de savoir si la création d'une Légation de Belgique au Canada serait agréable au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique dans le Dominion du Canada, et, le cas échéant, si le Gouvernement canadien serait disposé à agréer le Baron Silvercruys en qualité de Ministre de Belgique.

Je serais reconnaissant à Votre Excellence de vouloir bien porter ce qui précède à la connaissance du Gouvernement canadien, et je saisis etc.

E. DE CARTIER

45.

Mémorandum

Memorandum

[n.d., 1936]

DESIRE OF BELGIAN GOVERNEMENT TO ESTABLISH A LEGATION AT OTTAWA
AND TO RECEIVE AGRÉMENT OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT FOR BARON
SILVERCRUYS

Two questions require consideration:

(a) Whether the Belgian proposal is to be accepted by the Canadian Government; and

(b) Whether the Canadian Government is to reciprocate and, if so, to what extent.

(a) It is very unusual for a country to make a formal proposal of this nature without having first discussed it with the Government of the other country. Our position hitherto has been to tell inquirers that our Legation policy was at the outset on a reciprocal basis, sending and receiving Ministers simultaneously. While this is the general rule, there are very many exceptions to it, and it is hardly possible to refuse to accept a Minister if the other country insists. This is the case of Belgium, which has put forward the proposal in a formal way, without previous consultation. The situation is made more difficult by the press publicity which has been given to the proposal, in a despatch from London.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to turn down the proposal under these circumstances. On the other hand, if we accept it, we must be prepared to accept the consequence of the precedent thus created. Other Legations could thus be forced upon us, whether or not it might be convenient for the Canadian Government to accept them at any particular moment. The fact is that Canada, which is increasingly in the public eye, is rapidly becoming a country in which other countries expect to derive advantages from the establishment of a Legation. A number of countries, e.g. Italy, Holland,