

Decision to Separate Portfolio of External Affairs (1946)

By 1946 Mr. King himself found the war burden too great for him to carry the extra portfolio of External Affairs, and agreed to separate it by creating a separate Ministry.

It is said that coming events cast their shadows before. As early as 1909, when the appointment of an Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs was being discussed, certain of the objectors (e.g. Senator Sir MacKenzie Bowell and Senator Lougheed ) feared that, as in previous instances, this would be the forerunner of the creation of a new separate Ministerial portfolio, of which, it was repeatedly contended, there were already too many in Canada. Senator Lougheed said "This looks to me to be the prelude to establishing another portfolio of departmental government, which, I have no doubt, in the near future will blossom into that of a cabinet portfolio and the appointment of an additional minister." Senator Ferguson said that the question of enlarging portfolio positions did not come up for discussion under this Bill, but added his opinion that "if the effect of this Bill would be that a man brought in now under political exigencies, and made an under-secretary, would, in a year or two, to help carry some constituency, be given full rank with the Secretary of State, it will certainly be injurious to the public service. I hope nothing of the kind is in contemplation." The views of Sir Richard Cartwright, sponsor of the Bill in the Senate, were asked for. He replied, somewhat guardedly, "All I can say is the intention of the government is as defined in the Bill. We