

I recall that occasion to emphasize the necessity for closer contacts of the different parts of the British Empire with the outside world and the mutual beneficial results which are bound to arise from such contacts. It also discloses another strong reason why we should have on the spot a representative of Canada who will be constantly putting forward the advantages of Canada, its potentialities, as well as its aspirations, and its willingness to perform its share of the duties which the different nations of the world owe one another.

My right honourable friend (Right Hon. Sir George E. Foster), in dealing with the conflict which he considers inevitable between the component parts of the Empire and Great Britain, through the appointment of these representatives, forgot that action has been taken in this matter with the full consent and co-operation of the Government of Great Britain. The power which we have exercised for some years past in attending international conferences and in making our own treaties has been exercised with the approval, and, as suggested by my honourable leader (Hon. Mr. Dandurand), the hearty co-operation of the Imperial Government.

My right honourable friend must remember this also, that the plenipotentiaries appointed to attend these international conferences, as well as the plenipotentiaries whom we have sent or propose to send to foreign countries, derive their power from the King himself. They are accredited to foreign countries by the King. It is true that the King does not grant authority on the advice of his imperial advisers; it is on the recommendation of his Canadian advisers that he does it; still nobody has found any fault with that sort of thing, and there is no likelihood of conflict of any kind arising out of the exercise of that power.

The idea has been expressed that the Imperial Conference of 1926 altered our Constitution. Of course it did not alter it. Technically and legally the Constitution to-day is just what it was on the 1st of July, 1867. The King still has the power to disallow our legislation from beginning to end, whether it applies to internal or external affairs. The Colonial Validity Act is still in force. Theoretically our Constitution is not changed in the slightest particular; and there was no necessity for it to be changed in order that we might exercise the powers which we have exercised. We could have appointed plenipotentiaries in the year 1867, and we could have done it at any other time, and without in any way interfering with the Constitution. The Imperial Conference had no power to alter anything. It was merely a meeting of leaders

of the different Dominions and of Great Britain who conferred together and came to an understanding as to what was the real relationship between the Government of Great Britain and the Dominions. They sought a formula, and found and declared a formula, applicable to the existing status. They tried to crystallize in words the situation as it was in fact. That is all they did. The Conference did not claim to have power to do anything more. It certainly proceeded on the assumption that it had no power to do anything in the way of amending our Constitution.

There has been a great deal of talk lately on this subject, and some of it has been very loose indeed; loose in many ways; loose in ideas and loose in terms. For instance, the words "nation" and "nationhood" have been taken as synonymous with "state" and "statehood". Anyone who thinks for a moment will see that there is a tremendous difference. Autonomy and sovereignty do not mean the same thing at all, yet these terms are used alternatively without any distinction. Canada is an autonomous nation, but it is not a sovereign state, and will not be until it chooses some day—if it ever does—to declare its independence. It cannot be a sovereign state otherwise. So it seems to me that a great deal of unnecessary discussion of a purely academic nature has been indulged in. Not only are we not a sovereign state, but we are probably not exercising the largest measure of autonomous rights that can be exercised by a country which is not a sovereign state. A state may be composed of several nations. The difference between "nation" and "state" and the true meaning of those terms may be illustrated by the example of Switzerland. In Switzerland there are three different nationalities, the French, the Italian and the German, but there is only one sovereign state. In discussing matters of this nature it is of the utmost importance that we should always be precise and particular in the terms we use; otherwise the result may be endless confusion.

The situation might be put, again, in this way. *De jure* our Constitution is not that of a sovereign state, but *de facto* we are exercising some of the autonomous functions of a sovereign state. However, it seems to me that there is no use in continuing the discussion of this matter, and I refer to it merely in the hope that by doing so I may be able to correct false impressions which have been created throughout the community by looseness in the use of terms with separate and distinct meanings. Otherwise I would not have considered it necessary to engage in a long discussion on the subject.