

Prime Minister's Retention of External Affairs

From 1912 until 1946 the Prime Ministers continued to hold the portfolio of External Affairs.

Sir Robert Borden, while head of the Unionist Ministry from October 12, 1947, to July 10, 1920, remained as Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, as Prime Minister from July 10, 1920, to December 29, 1921, continued to follow Sir Robert Borden's precedent and kept the portfolio of External Affairs in his own hands. He took two oaths of office, one as Prime Minister and the other as Secretary of State for External Affairs.

In the first Ministry of Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King (Liberal), this arrangement was continued. During his tenure, Sir Joseph Pope, the chief architect and first permanent head of the Department, retired in 1925, worn out and in ill-health; and on April 1st of that year Dr. O.D. Skelton was appointed Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, an office he held until his tragic death in January, 1941.

There was no change in the Prime Minister's dual position when in 1926 Mr. Meighen again became head of the Government for the brief period from June 29 to September 25, 1926. Mr. Meighen, in recommending his Cabinet to the Governor General, ^{and} acting as the Committee of the Privy Council, advised his own appointment as Secretary of State for External Affairs. He thereupon acted for three months with an "acting Cabinet", since