

This brief review of the principal activities of Sir Robert Borden in this sphere, in conjunction with the British and other empire premiers, suffices to indicate the key role of the Prime Minister in the conduct of Canada's external affairs, and in the development of its increasing autonomy in its imperial relationships. A former Private Secretary to Mr. Mackenzie King and a member of the Department of External Affairs, Professor James A. Gibson, told an audience at Carleton University in Ottawa on March 18, 1958, of Borden's great contribution. "The working-out of Canadian autonomy was after all, a lengthy process; but the working-out had to be done, and this required activity and persuasion rather than passivity and hopefulness. Autonomy was a corollary of the acceptance of responsible government. In theory, control by Britain of foreign relations lasted until at least 1917, when Borden's celebrated memorandum, looking to the future of a British Commonwealth of Nations, in effect altered the whole concept of the imperial relationship. Any Canadian in Sir Robert's position, from the time of his visit to England in 1915 and on all his subsequent visits until his return to Canada in May of 1919, would have been bound to insist upon status. Status was the only basis upon which the full weight of the Canadian argument could be brought to bear. If it had not been insisted upon during the active conduct of hostilities, the occasion for insisting upon it might not then have arisen for many years. There would have been a slowing down of interest, and perhaps of initiative, and it might have been very difficult to