

written law. The functions of the Secretary of State for War as administering the royal authority and prerogative in respect of the army, are laid down with great precision by the Order of the Queen in Council of June, 1870. Under him there are three great departments, the heads of which are equally responsible to him, the Commander in Chief for the Military Department, the Surveyor General for the Ordnance and Supply Department, the Financial Secretary for the Finance Department. No act of discipline can be exercised, no appointment or promotion can be made, no troops can be moved, no payments can be made, without the approval, expressed or implied, of the Secretary of State. To say that the Secretary of State has no controlling power in such matters, when he is responsible to parliament for any improper exercise of the Queen's prerogative in regard to them is manifestly absurd. On this subject, I have never known any misapprehension within the walls of the War Office or in Parliament.

He also read an extract from a book entitled "Lord Cardwell at the War Office," by Sir Robert Biddulph, at page 239:

Thus was the question of the royal prerogative with regard to the command of the army placed on a constitutional basis. The General Commanding-in-Chief was formally declared to be a subordinate of the Minister of War and that minister was declared to be the channel through whom the Sovereign's commands were to be conveyed to the army.

All military work hitherto done at the War Office was transferred to the Horse Guards, both offices being made one, so that correspondence between the two offices should cease, it being clearly understood that no question should arise to prevent the Secretary of State from sending for any officer or any clerk in any military office, if he wished to examine him on a question of doubt.

Under the British constitution the Secretary of State is necessarily a member of parliament, and must usually be a civilian and therefore without that sort of knowledge that pertains to a life spent in the military service. This is an unavoidable result of our parliamentary system, and as it could not be changed, it was necessary to make the best arrangement for working it. To this end it appeared to Lord Cardwell that the Secretary of State should surround himself with the best officers of the army as the heads of the various departments, so that after freely consulting them he could form a sound judgment and come to a clear conclusion upon the great questions submitted for his decision.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier made one of his great speeches in the debate. He first set forth the unconstitutional course adopted by Lord Dundonald all through. He was able to quote an exact parallel in England, when Lord Wolseley, unable to agree with the Secretary of State for War resigned and stated his position in the House of Lords. Lord Salisbury and Lord Lansdowne replied to the effect that Lord Wolseley's position was inconsistent with our form of government. He desired to appeal over the head of the minister to the press and public and ask for a determination of the question between them. That, the British government said, was impossible. That was what Lord Dundonald did. He said that there was an issue between the minister and himself and he wanted to refer it to the Canadian people through the press. He protested against the minister refusing to publish a certain report. What right, asked Sir Wilfrid Laurier, had Lord Dundonald to question the minister's disposal of the report addressed to him? It was the exclusive right of the government to decide what should be done with such a report. Such a report could not be used except to accompany a government policy, and policy was for the government and for the government alone. The Premier made the point that the trivial Fisher incident was not the cause of Lord Dundonald's retirement, and read from the General's own published statement to show that it was because he could not be the sole judge in the militia department, because the minister "interfered" with him, that he decided to "appeal to the people." Sir Wilfrid had not an unkind word to say of Lord Dundonald. He simply did not understand his position and his errors of judgment made his dismissal imperative. The Premier quoted the recent case of a British officer, a General, who wrote to the press criticizing his superiors. In removing the General back to the retired list from his command, the minister of war in England said that such a breach of the regulations and of discipline could not be overlooked, and warned all other officers that if they followed his bad example they would earn the same