

Through want of knowledge of colonial conditions and of the individuals concerned the official mind was necessarily unable to acquire the necessary note of sympathy. Colonial grievances received short shrift. The Colonies themselves, indeed, were regarded as an expensive encumbrance, and whilst petitions which were deemed by the colonist to be meritorious were pigeon-holed, the bonds of union were being undermined by the cold indifference of British administration. Those defects have to a large extent been removed in recent years, but the extraordinary and rapid changes brought about by the war in the relations of the Dominions with the mother country demand further changes and progressive administration to continually keep abreast of these new developments.

I wish to guard against any suggestion that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, or his staff, are wanting in sympathy towards the Dominions. I freely recognize that Lord Milner does his best to meet the aspirations and desires of all sections of the Empire. I keenly appreciate his goodwill, but he is working with machinery that is now becoming obsolete. The very name of 'Colonial Office' is now out of date, and resurrects associations and recollections which in old days stood for want of sympathy and indifference. Why should the Minister who presides over the self-governing portions of the Empire be encumbered with the administration of the Crown Colonies? The necessary changes are a matter of policy for the Government rather than for the individual Minister, and it is to them that I make the appeal to recognize the great pace at which constitutional history is being made to-day, to scrap the old machinery and replace it with what is up to date. I venture to suggest, as one who has had experience of the working of the Colonial Office, both in this country and in Australia, that the officers of the Dominions Department in the future should have served their apprenticeship in the Dominions; not in the Commonwealth of Australia alone, but they should devote a reasonable period of time to each of these great outposts of Empire, in order to qualify themselves for the better