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ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 1912.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

When details are arranged under which the Dominion of Canada in return for co-operation in Imperial Defence, is given a place in the councils of the Empire, the Department of External Affairs, hitherto little in the public eye, will naturally take first rank in importance among the departments of the Canadian Government. It is of interest to recall, therefore, in view of recent developments in the Mother Country, that legislation vesting in the Prime Minister of the Dominion the office of Secretary of State for External Affairs was passed by the Dominion Parliament last session, and that the act, fathered by the Laurier Government in 1909, creating the department but leaving the responsibility as part of the many duties of the Secretary of State, was thereby repealed.

Mr. Borden introduced the Department of External Affairs Bill on January 10th last, when it was given its first reading, and on January 15th the other stages were completed. In explaining the change in the legislation on the second reading, Mr. Borden said:

"The object of the bill is to bring the Department of External Affairs under the Prime Minister, and there are many reasons of convenience and in the public interest why that should be so. The bill has been drafted and introduced for that purpose."

The bill passed without further comment. In the light of events of the past month the transfer of authority to the Prime Minister becomes of more particular interest. Mr. Borden has made an offer to the British Government that Canada will take a permanent and active part in Imperial Defence if given a voice, to quote Mr. Asquith, in "the determination of the policy and the direction of Imperial affairs," and the principle embodied in the offer has been accepted. When the understanding between Canada and the Mother Country takes concrete form the Department of External Affairs, for which the Prime Minister himself will now be responsible, will be the channel through which communications between the two Governments on this subject will pass. The Minister of External Affairs, therefore, will occupy the same important position in relation to the Dominion Administration as the holder of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in relation to the British Government.

Section 3 of the act of 1912 reads as follows:

"The member of the King's Privy Council for Canada holding the reconstituted position of First Minister shall be the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and in this act he is hereafter referred to as 'the Minister.'"

Under Section 4 the Governor-in-Council is given authority to appoint an Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, who shall be deputy head of the Department, and such other officers and clerks as are requisite for the due administration of the business of the Department.

It is, however, to Section 5, defining the powers and duties of the department, that special interest now attaches. It says:

"The Minister, as head of the Department, shall have the conduct of all official communications between the Government of Canada and the Government of any other country in connection with the external affairs of Canada, and shall be charged with such other duties as may be assigned to the Department by order of the Governor-in-Council in relation to such external affairs, or to the conduct and management of international or inter-colonial negotiations so far as they may appertain to the Government of Canada."

As explained by the former Secretary of State, Mr. Charles Murphy, when the original act was passed in 1909, "the external affairs of Canada" are "that class of public affairs which relate to matters other than those of purely internal concern." The Government of Canada holds all its official communications extending beyond the bounds of the Dominion, whether with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with the Sister Dominions or with British Ambassadors to foreign countries, through the Governor General by whom they are referred to the Privy Council. These communications and despatches were formerly distributed among the departments to which they related. The purpose of the act of 1909, preserved in the act of 1912, was to refer all such communications and despatches from the Privy Council to the Department of External Affairs, or "Foreign Affairs," as Sir Wilfrid Laurier then termed it. The advantage claimed under the old act was the concentration of all such matters under one responsible head, the Secretary of State.

It is of interest to note that Mr. Borden and Mr. Foster, who spoke in the debate of 1909, both took the ground that the authority should be vested in the Prime Minister of Canada. Mr. Borden's remarks are today very much to the point. Dealing with this phase of the question he said:

"There is one other circumstance to which I would like to draw attention, and which to me has seemed important in view of what has been suggested this afternoon by hon. gentlemen who have been members of an administration, a privilege which, to the present time, it has not been my fortune to enjoy. In the Commonwealth of Australia, situated, in so far as Great Britain is concerned, very much as we are, the Minister of External Affairs is the Prime Minister, so that all the matters of a confidential character alluded to this afternoon, some of which possibly could not be disclosed even to the Cabinet as a whole, shall come to the Prime Minister as Minister of External Affairs, and he shall use his judgment and discretion as to how far they must be kept confidential even as far as members of his Cabinet are concerned. If we are to concede what the Prime Minister has argued for—and I am not disposed to concede it, because I am not yet convinced—but if one were disposed to concede the argument of the Prime Minister that a new department is necessary for the mere purpose of organization, then I say that that department should be under the control of the Prime Minister and not under the control of the Secretary of State."

The progress of events since the debate in March, 1909, is not without significance. Speaking in the House of Commons at the opening of the session of 1910-11, Mr. Borden enunciated the policy which he has laid before the Home Government and which will give the Dominion a voice in the affairs of the Empire. The speeches of

the Prime Minister made in the Mother Country are an echo of the sentiments he expressed on that occasion when Leader of the Opposition. In moving an amendment on the address in reply to the speech from the Throne he said:

"If Canada and the other Dominions of the Empire are to take their part as nations of this Empire in the defence of the Empire as a whole, shall it be that we, contributing to that defence of the whole Empire, shall have absolutely, as citizens of this country, no voice whatever in the councils of the Empire. I do not think that such would be a tolerable condition. I do not believe the people of Canada would for one moment submit to such a condition. Shall members of this House, representative men, representing 221 constituencies of this country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, shall no one of them have the same voice with regard to those vast imperial issues that the humblest taxpayer in the British Isles has at this moment? It does not seem to me that such a condition would make for the integrity of the Empire, for the closer cooperation of the Empire. Regard must be had to these far reaching considerations, a permanent policy would have to be worked out, and when that permanent policy had been worked out and explained to the people of Canada, to every citizen in this country, then it would be the duty of any government to go to the people of Canada to receive their mandate and accept and act upon their approval or disapproval of that policy."

In the terms of this policy Mr. Borden has now made an offer to the British Government that Canada will give active and permanent co-operation to the Mother Country's programme of Imperial Naval Defence. The offer has not only been endorsed by the Canadian press of both parties, but has been welcomed and accepted in principle by the representatives of the great parties in the Old Country. The details have yet to be arranged, and are a matter for conference and negotiation when the Canadian Ministers return to Canada. The offer has been made in the name of the Dominion, and it is a direct interest in Imperial affairs and in the foreign policy of Great Britain. As Secretary of State for External Affairs, in the terms of the Act, it apparently will devolve upon Mr. Borden "to conduct all official communications on behalf of the Government of Canada" and to manage "international and inter-colonial negotiations." While it is needless to say that the members of the Cabinet will share in Mr. Borden's confidence, the situation points to many new and responsible duties which the Prime Minister in the interest of Canada and of the Empire at large will be called upon to perform.

THE VERDICT FOR PROTECTION.

The Democratic platform professes to believe that the protective policy injures American industry and labor. It alleges that "the high Republican tariff is the principal cause of the unequal distribution of wealth." It is a system of taxation which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. Under its operations the American farmer and laboring man are the chief sufferers. "It raises the cost of the necessities of life to them, but does not protect their product or wages."

This opinion, inasmuch as it is an attack on Protection, is not shared by a majority of the great commercial nations of the world. France has had experience both of Free Trade and of Protection and it finds that its industries prosper more under Protection than under Free Trade and that under protective tariffs there is more employment for labor than under tariffs for revenue only.

The Germans are no fools. They put their scientific brains to the study of economics and apply the lessons they have learned from observing the experience of other nations with the workings of tariffs. As the outcome they thought it better for German industry and German labor that these should be protected against foreign competition. Their experience with Protection has satisfied them that it benefits the worker and the farmer, and they keep on strengthening the protective policy year after year.

If two of the leading industrial and commercial nations of continental Europe thought that Free Trade were beneficial to the laboring classes they would pursue that policy. The fact that they deliberately choose Protection shows that their experience is that protective duties on foreign articles raise the wages of laborers. A thing that benefits European workers can not hurt laborers on this continent. It is well known that a protective policy increases the wages of labor.

The Mother Country has had ample experience of Free Trade and the condition of labor and the lower scale of wages prevailing there in contrast with that in countries under a protective tariff, show that Free Trade does not benefit the British laborer. The policy of Tariff Reform is steadily gaining ground. No less than eight seats have been won by the Opposition since the last general election. A policy of Tariff Reform and Imperial Preference are two of the main planks in the Unionist platform.

Three somewhat pointed questions which advocates of Free Trade have failed to answer are worth consideration. Why is a large section of the British people thinking seriously of returning to Protection? Why has France a high protective tariff? Why did Germany, when weighing the advantages of Free Trade and Protection, deliberately adopt Protection and reject Free Trade?

Current Comment

(Norfolk, Virginia, Pilot.)

If the order excluding reporters from detective bureaus and the halls of the police headquarters building is enforced, the New York public will be deprived of even the small measure of protection they now have. The trouble is that the reporters detect entirely too many things which the authorities are selfishly interested in keeping undetected.

(Vancouver News-Advertiser.)

The failure of the city of Toronto to make a favorable sale in London of municipal four per cent. bonds need not be considered a reflection on the credit of Toronto. It cannot be expected that when consols are sold at 75 the British investor will take Canadian public bonds at the same price that he would give when consols are worth 90.

(Hamilton Spectator.)

The remarks of a worshipper in a Toronto church, though disconcerting to those around him might have been excused; but when, on being ejected, he informed the congregation that they could all go to a much warmer place, he was certainly exceeding the limits of courtesy.

(Toronto Mail and Empire.)

A university professor's fervent declaration that it should be "our hope, our belief and our prayer" that the calamity of war between Britain and Germany should be averted does not abate the necessity of keeping our powder dry.

(Peterboro Review.)

A Canadian actress has bought a \$500 coffin for her pet cat. While a feline may have nine lives, it is in this case fortunate for the owner that there cannot be more than one funeral.

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BRITISH SQUADRON TO VISIT DOMINION

Powerful Naval Detachment Likely to Come to Canada Soon—Churchill's Trip Not Yet Settled.

London, Aug. 10.—The Daily Telegraph's naval correspondent writes that the report that Winston Churchill, first lord of the Admiralty, will go to Canada, should be received with caution.

That a British squadron will visit the Dominion at an early date is a probable development and would constitute a precedent since when groups of His Majesty's ships cruise to the Dominions periodically, or when Prince Louis of Battenberg took an imposing squadron to Quebec.

IMMENSE ASBESTOS DEPOSIT

Llano, Tex., Aug. 9.—It is claimed by F. S. Ingram of Chicago, vice-president of the National Asbestos Refining Company of that city, that the deposit of asbestos recently discovered near here and which he and his associates have acquired, is the largest of that mineral substance yet discovered in any part of the world. He says that the outcrop of the fibrous mineral is known to cover about sixty acres. The deposit is 500 feet wide and more than 1700 feet long. Its depth is not known. The company is preparing to install a plant for handling the product on a large scale.

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MINISTERS ARE SOON TO RETURN

London, Aug. 10.—The Canadian ministerial visit may now be regarded as closed. Hon. Mr. Doherty, who leaves London for good today, will spend a few days in Ireland, sailing from Queenstown on Friday next with Mr. Pelletier accompanying him. Mr. Hazon has decided to sail on the 21st. Mr. Borden, according to present arrangements, following two days later.

The premier will spend the week.

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