

Apparently the suggestion was revived a year or two later. Pope, in a letter to Mr. Borden, dated Dec. 30, 1911, commented:

May I take the liberty to offer a few observations on the suggestion that the Department of External Affairs should be placed under the President of the Privy Council, as such. I fear the effect of this would be to make the External Affairs an annex, as it were, of the Privy Council office, which is not a department of State at all, though commonly so reckoned. The President of the Privy Council may not always be the Prime Minister. In the last Conservative Ministry (Tupper) the Presidency was not held by the Prime Minister. Nor was it in Sir John Thompson's administration. Of your seven predecessors in the office of Prime Minister, three never held the office of President of the Privy Council when Premier, and a fourth was necessarily Minister of Justice, Interior, and Railways. To transfer the External Affairs from one portfolio to another, would not tend to its prestige or importance.

Having disposed of this suggestion concerning the President of the Privy Council, Pope proceeded in the same letter, to argue his case for the Prime Minister. He went on to say:

I still venture to hope that you may see your way to take this office under you as Prime Minister, and to make it a separate secretariate, designating the present Secretary of State, the Secretary of State for Home Affairs.

There are reasons of convenience which would be served by this plan. At present every passport issued by this Department has to be sent to the Secretary of State for reading. Under the system I advocate, the Secretary of State for External Affairs could be entrusted by the Governor General with a separate seal for this and kindred purposes, in short would occupy as such a status which I am afraid he can attain in no other way. Sir Wilfrid Laurier evidently intended this. The first recommendation I laid before him was prepared for signature as "Secretary of State". Without any suggestion on my part, he added, with his own hand, the words "for External Affairs" and directed that the title should always be used.

Further does not the existing statute, in creating the office of "Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs" appear to contemplate that there shall be a Secretary of State for External Affairs? I do not quite see how there can be an Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs without a Secretary of State for External Affairs, but if there were, such official would popularly be regarded as in some sense amenable to the jurisdiction, not merely of the Secretary of State,