

34. *Memorandum from Ambassador in United States
to Governor General*

Ottawa, January 31, 1918

NOTES ON THE MANNER IN WHICH CANADIAN BUSINESS IS
TRANSACTIONED IN WASHINGTON

Matters which concern the Dominion and another colony or Dominion or third country are referred to the Foreign Office, and no action is taken by the British Embassy until the Foreign Office has sent its instructions. This may lead to considerable delay, as was the case in the fishery question concerning Newfoundland as well as Canada. The Foreign Office consulted the Colonial Office, who consulted Newfoundland, who delayed a reply, with the result that no action was taken in a matter in which the interests of Canada were deeply involved.

In matters concerning only Canada and the United States, the general procedure has been as follows: the papers relating to each question are kept in separate files; action is taken in conformity with the wishes of the Dominion Government expressed in writing through the Governor General; this action is of a formal and official character, and follows the letter of the instructions. Should a question arise involving verbal explanations, the Embassy conducts such conversations with the State Department and, with the permission of the State Department, with the competent Department of the United States Government. When the question at issue is brought to a critical stage, the Canadian Government, on its own suggestion, or by the suggestion of the Embassy or of the United States, has been in the habit of sending a competent official from Ottawa to Washington, a journey of under twenty-four hours. This official is presented by the Embassy to the State Department, and when their permission has been obtained, to the competent Department of the United States Government. The Canadian official communicates direct with the United States officials, and embodies the result of his verbal communication in a memorandum which is communicated to the Canadian Government and to the Embassy, where it is kept on file. The Canadian official is either the head of the Department concerned—for instance, Mr. Hazen—or else the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Sir Joseph Pope, who is intimately acquainted with all the leading officials in Washington. On ordinary diplomatic questions arising between the Dominion and the United States, for instance, questions of money compensations, purchase of ships, railway material etc., Sir Joseph Pope has been accustomed to proceed to Washington and conduct the necessary verbal communications there. The State Department approves of this arrangement, and is very willing that business should be transacted direct by the heads of the Canadian Departments concerned, with the corresponding number in the American Government. The part that the Embassy plays is merely to inform the State Department and to stand aside until the negotiation is completed, or until an official communication from the Embassy to the