

Ottawa, Canada.  
Monday, June 30, 1924.

**EDITORIAL.**

*Canada and "the Colonies."*

At question time in the House last Thursday, Mr. H. E. Spencer, member for Battle River, asked the prime minister for some information about the Inter-Allied Conference which is to be held in London. The United States will be represented at the conference by the American ambassador, Mr. Kellogg. Mr. Spencer wanted to know if Canada had also been invited to participate. Premier King replied that he had received some preliminary communications concerning the proposed conference, from the secretary of state for the colonies, but no official invitation, so far, to take part.

Mr. W. F. Maclean, M.P. of South York, pounced on the premier's reference to communications from "the secretary of state for the colonies." He inquired if the prime minister had ever drawn the attention of the British government to the need for a more appropriate term than "colonies" to those who make up the associated dominions. Premier King replied:

I have never drawn attention to that particular title. It is an old historical one. Perhaps some day it will come up for discussion in this House, but I have not thought of making any intimation on the subject.

In a statement to *The Citizen*, Mr. Maclean takes the view that "the secretary of state for the colonies" is getting out of step with the newer march of things. In the movement towards the linking up of the nations within the British Commonwealth, of which Britain is the mother link and the other dominions sister links, there may be need for a more suitable word to express the office of secretary of state for this league of British nations than "for the colonies."

The prime minister would probably agree. The question should come up for discussion, as he intimated in answering Mr. Maclean. One effective way to bring it up would be to devise a better channel for communications between the Dominion and the government of Great Britain. Cabled communications between the colonial office and the prime minister's office or the department of External Affairs in Ottawa, restricted as they are to stilted official language, are totally inadequate.

It is an absurd situation that there can be greater freedom of exchange of views between the British government and Washington and Paris, through the American and French ambassadors in London, than between the premiers of Great Britain and Canada. Perhaps some day there will be a new department to take the place of the colonial office in London: it might be presided over by the secretary of state for the Commonwealth, or the minister for the Overseas Dominions, or some such expressive title.

In the meanwhile, Canada has the constitutional right to appoint a Dominion representative with the status of minister in London. He might not need to be a cabinet minister. Someone who could serve Canada as the American ambassador serves the United States would meet the immediate needs of the situation. Some title other than "ambassador" would be desirable. Perhaps the United States system of appointing secretaries with cabinet rank might suggest a plan. Such an office as Canadian Secretary for the Commonwealth would be more comprehensive than Canadian High Commissioner, in London.

Whatever the title, Canada should be represented in London, and Great Britain in Ottawa, by more than trade commissioners. Until it is possible for Premier Ramsay MacDonald to call up Premier Mackenzie King on the telephone, for an intimate conversation occasionally, cables from "the Secretary of State for the Colonies" are a very unsatisfactory method of communication between the governments. There should be someone to make informal reports and exchange helpful views.

*Citizen*

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MEIGHREN PAPERS, Series 3 (S.S. 26, I, Volume 10)

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