

There remains one unexplained fact. Earl Grey in his correspondence distinctly attributed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier the notion of a separated Dominions Office, quoting almost verbatim his alleged words in favour of such a reorganization. In fact, in reading Grey's correspondence, it would appear that Laurier was the chief proponent of this proposal, which Grey enthusiastically seconded. Yet Laurier took no positive steps to advocate it at the Colonial Conference in London in 1907 or the Imperial Conference in 1911, indeed backed away from the scheme, and asserted his entire satisfaction with the existing arrangements, the standing Imperial Secretariat and after 1907 the Dominions "department" of the Colonial Office. The most he did in 1911 was to have an "open mind" and to express willingness to go along with whatever seemed best to the majority of the other Dominions. "Though I and my colleagues are satisfied with what exists we would not offer any objection if the other members of the Conference are disposed to press the point." It is difficult to understand whether Earl Grey was mistaken and entirely misrepresenting Sir Wilfrid Laurier's views, or whether Laurier had in private conversation with the Governor General expressed one view, as Grey attributed to him, but in public action took the opposite and more negative view, to Grey's embarrassment, mystification, and disappointment.