

Hon. R. DANDURAND: Honourable gentlemen, I thought that we had made the best possible choice of an Ambassador to the United States in the person of Mr. Vincent Massey, but after listening to the remarks of my honourable friend from de Lanaudière (Hon. Mr. Casgrain) I wonder whether we should not perhaps have turned to him.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: It is not yet too late.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I desire to join with my honourable friend (Hon. W. B. Ross) in congratulating the honourable gentleman from Lethbridge (Hon. Mr. Buchanan) and the honourable gentleman from Gloucester (Hon. Mr. Turgeon) upon the very interesting addresses which they have delivered in this Chamber: they were informative and highly satisfactory in form and matter. I may have failed to convey all that was said by my honourable friend from Gloucester (Hon. Mr. Turgeon) to my honourable friend the Leader on the other side of the House (Hon. W. B. Ross) when I interrupted him. He touched upon one matter of considerable importance, namely, the implementing of the recommendations made by the Duncan Commission. There may be in some instances a necessity for modification or amendment of the Constitution, and the honourable gentleman from Gloucester said that he hoped that those modifications would be carried out according to the spirit and letter of the Constitution.

Honourable gentlemen have referred to His Excellency the Governor General, and to Her Excellency Lady Willingdon, who have lately come to Canada. I desire to join in congratulating the country upon having, as the representative of His Majesty the King, such an able public man as Lord Willingdon. His career is familiar to us all. I am quite sure that he will discharge his duties with credit to himself and to the entire satisfaction of the people of Canada. Her Excellency will adorn Rideau Hall with the grace and charm that have been so evident since she has come to our shores. I pray that during their stay in Canada they may have all the happiness, comfort and satisfaction which it is within our power to bestow.

My honourable friend has spoken of the Imperial Conference, and has said that the conclusions of that Conference have not to his mind changed our status in any particular. My own conviction is that all the powers that are to be found in the report of the Imperial Conference were already contained within the four corners of our Constitution. I have had occasion before now to claim that

those powers were there for us to enjoy as we needed them, and that the evolution of Canada since 1867 has been a natural development of the powers as conferred by the Constitution. It has often been stated that we possessed the status which is now recognized and crystallized in that report. The advantage that we shall find will be in the official recognition of that claim and free exercise of those powers. I approve every word of the proviso concerning the status of Great Britain and the Dominions. Here is what the Committee said:

The committee are of the opinion that nothing would be gained by attempting to lay down a constitution for the British Empire. Its widely scattered parts have very different characteristics, very different histories and are at very different stages of evolution, while considered as a whole it defies classification and bears no real resemblance to any other political organization which now exists or has ever yet been tried. There is, however, one most important element in it which from a strictly constitutional point of view has now as regards all vital matters reached its full development—we refer to the group of self-governing communities composed of Great Britain and the Dominions.

Their position and mutual relation may be readily defined. They are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by common allegiance to the crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of nations.

I believe that this statement is very timely, not because our status was questioned within the British Empire, but because it was questioned outside the Empire. A member of the Senate of the United States, misapprehending completely our imperial organization, stated in a resolution that one of the reasons why they would not accept the Treaty of Versailles was that the British Empire was given six votes and the United States only one. The same impression existed elsewhere. A few months before the last general election in France, Mr. Painlevé, who became Speaker of the Assembly and then Prime Minister of France, declared that he adhered to the League of Nations, but was not yet reconciled to the idea that Great Britain should have six votes and France only one.

The situation which is officially described and recognized in that document has been at all times visualized by our leading statesmen. I have had occasion to state—I am not sure that it was not in this Chamber—that when the Fathers of Confederation sent their delegation to Great Britain, headed by Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Etienne Cartier, there was only one matter that had not been settled, namely, the title to be given to our country. When Sir