

They were young communities, almost entirely absorbed in the arduous work of settling empty territory, building houses, roads, railways, schools, and the other primary equipment of national, political and economic life. Not one of them had any diplomatic service or any means apart from occasional newspaper articles of first hand information about world affairs.⁽¹⁾

Nevertheless, for some time before the War of 1914, the practice had been to allow Dominion representatives to take part in political negotiations in which the Dominions' interests were unmistakably involved, but the British member, unlike his fellow in commercial negotiations, continued to function as an important part of the delegation. At times, the British dominance irked the Canadians, when they felt that their own interests were subordinated to British interests; and, at the time of the unfortunate Alaska Award, Laurier expostulated and complained that Canada still lacked its own treaty-making power; but in later years he took the position that the British control over Canadian diplomacy was essential, inevitable, and satisfactory. In relations with the United States, this acquiescence was in large part due to the excellent cooperation of the British Ambassador, James Bryce, on behalf of Canada. "The presence of Mr. Bryce at Washington," remarks Berriedale Keith, "was marked by great success in treaty-making," and on 15 December, 1909, in the House of Commons Sir Wilfrid Laurier emphatically declared his dissent from the idea of sending a Canadian attaché to Washington on the score that Mr. Bryce's work sufficed for all purposes. In January, 1911, he again eulogized his services. The treaties concluded were of high value,

(1) Cit. in Toynbee: British Empire Foreign Relations after the Peace Conference. p.14.