

Two incidents of recent occurrence strongly emphasize the fact of our diplomatic independence. The first is the order of King George that, at the Coronation, the representatives of the "Dominions" are to be accorded rank with the representatives of foreign nations. The other incident is the invitation extended by President Taft to the Canadian delegates at Washington to be present as guests at the diplomatic dinner in the White House.

"The effect," as the *Toronto Globe* very aptly said, "is to proclaim to the assembled ambassadors of foreign nations that the Dominion of Canada is sufficiently a 'nation' to be regarded as not out of place among the real ones."

Canada is also independent with reference to that most important subject, war. In the old days, our Governors controlled our militia, appointed the officers, and issued the marching orders. Lord Minto imagined that the Governor-General still retained certain authority, and would have lost his place had he not been willing to accept the contrary view.

Canada has plainly asserted her independence with reference to British wars. (You will observe that I am not at all referring to the action which Canada would take in the event of a British war. I am proving merely that Canada may do as she pleases. Any credit that she got in connection with the Boer war was rightly hers, only because her action was purely voluntary.) At the Colonial Conference of 1902, Mr. Chamberlain put directly to the Colonial Prime Ministers the question: What contingents will the colonies send in case of a European war? Canada and Australia replied that the matter would be considered "when the need arose."

Since that date, Sir Wilfrid Laurier has declared in the House of Commons that Canada may, or may not, take part in British wars. And in a speech at Montreal (10th October, 1910) he said:

"Does it follow that because we are exposed to attack we are going to take part in all the wars of the Empire? No. We shall take part if we think proper; we shall certainly take part if our territory is attacked" (a).

There are two other points to be noticed in this connection. In the first place, can we declare war? Of course we can. We can commit an act of war to-morrow, if we so wish. There is very little

(a) This is the doctrine of the Colonial Office, as well as of Canada. In discussing the suggestion that a Governor-General has a right to over-rule his Ministers upon matters relating to war, Mr. Keith (of the Colonial Office) in his book "Responsible Government in the Dominions," (p. 198) said that that "would involve the theory that the Imperial Government could insist on colonial forces taking part in a war, a doctrine opposed to the fundamental principles of self-government, which leaves it to a colony to decide how far it will participate in wars due to imperial policy."