

Office, substituting as one of its links, the United Kingdom High Commissioner for the Governor General in various of the dominions.

"The principal duty of the Dominions Office was to give as much background information as possible about developments in foreign affairs to the dominion governments. In the ordinary course its contact in the dominions' capitals was with the Dominion Departments of External Affairs. Matters of highest moment were, however, usually dealt with direct by Prime Ministers. It is, however, an illusion to suppose that a communication even from one Prime Minister to another necessarily disposed of a problem more quickly than was possible by other means. A Prime Minister in a dominion was a member of a Cabinet collectively responsible to his Parliament and he was in no position to take an important decision without consulting with his colleagues."⁽¹⁾

There does not appear to have been any great pressure on the part of Canada for a reorganization or bifurcation of the Colonial Office. As has been indicated in Part I of this survey, Earl Grey, while Governor General, had warmly advocated the creation of a separate Dominions Office, apparently believing that this was the desire of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Laurier, however, remained passive in the matter,

⁽¹⁾ Nicholas Mansergh: Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, p. 69.