

and one calculated to remove the difficulties we have been labouring under:-

With reference to clause 1: Much of the confusion which has taken place in the past has arisen from referring despatches of a series to different departments, so that no department possesses all the papers or knows what action is being taken in regard to any particular subject by other departments. This is not wholly due to the Privy Council, for it also happens with regard to those despatches which do not go to Council but are referred direct by the Governor General to individual departments. It seems to me that the distribution of such despatches as the Governor General desires to refer to his Advisers, whether collectively or individually, might with perfect constitutional propriety and much practical advantage be distributed by a responsible Minister. And I do not see what difference it could make to the Governor General's Office.

Under the present plan, despatches referred to Council lie there sometimes for days, or perhaps, during the summer months, for weeks. All that time is lost. When they are taken up, little is learned from their hurried perusal, and they are referred to a particular Minister with the object of ascertaining their exact bearing on the subject to which they relate. Now, would it not be a great saving of time and better all round, that the despatch should first receive that treatment which is necessary to enable Council to deal with it intelligently when it comes before them. This matter of distribution is not material, but I venture to think it would be advantageous.

Paragraph 2 does not call for any remark.

Paragraph 3 is the essential one. Unless the procedure is arranged on some definite principle we shall be no better off than before.

Attached to this covering letter or memorandum was Pope's draft of March 25th of the proposed Order-in-Council, the clauses of which he alludes to in his letter. Pope appears to have made a second redraft on May 29th, which apparently received some quick review in the Secretary of State's Office or in Cabinet, was slightly amended and rephrased in red pencil, and then was approved by the Committee of the Privy Council as Order-in-Council P.C.1242 of date of June 1, 1909.