

was not at all enthusiastic. Nor was Sir Robert Borden, who wrote to Strathcona on December, 1913, that the Ministry "did not consider the time opportune for expanding a very large sum of money". To this Strathcona replied to Borden at some length on January 17, 1914, only three days before he died; he composed and signed it on his deathbed, the last letter he wrote. In it he said:

In view of the circumstances mentioned in your letter I am by no means surprised that you and your colleagues do not consider the time opportune for expending a very large sum of money in connection with the site and buildings for a business home in London for the Dominion of Canada. . .

An enormously expensive edifice near the Strand on the plan put before me by Lord Grey, with an elevation overtopping not only the Commonwealth and other buildings in the immediate vicinity, but the dome of the great Cathedral St. Paul's, I could not possibly regard as other than an unpardonable expenditure, and in my mind such a vast building, with a dominating pinnacle erected as a striking advertisement, would provoke ridicule rather than bring advantage to our great country and its people. I am more convinced every day that it is not in the grand architectural effect of the offices of the Dominion in London that the requirements of the situation are to be found, but in the work that is actually done within them in the interests of the Canadian people.

At the same time a Syndicate or Company registered as the Exchange of International and Colonial Commerce, Limited, has formally asked me to place before you certain statements in connection with the Aldwych site and their negotiations with Lord Grey, which they consider should be brought to your knowledge, and I enclose the statutory declaration they have forwarded for this purpose. (1)

In May, 1914, Earl Grey - the first ex-Governor General to do so - returned to Canada on a cross-country tour from Victoria. He stopped at Ottawa to confer with the Government as to his Dominions' House scheme after

(1) ~~Essex~~ Beckles Willson: The Life of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal. p.578.