

Moreover, I am naturally so conservative that I would not willingly disturb the system under which the Secretary of State of Canada is the sole channel of communication between the Dominion and the Provinces. This system has theoretical advantages, but these are, in my judgment, over-borne by practical considerations. Under the present system, delays are the rule. The Colonial Office frequently has to call attention to unanswered despatches, which in most cases are unanswered because the Provinces will not send in the necessary information to enable us to answer them. This is bad enough, but complaints from a foreign Government are more serious, and it is particularly unfortunate that we should appear to show any discourtesy to the United States at this time. With five years' experience of the present system, I see no prospect of improvement unless Sir Robert will give effect to my suggestions as to the channel of communication. In that hope I submit a draft report to the Governor-General-in-Council recommending that the Secretary of State for External Affairs be authorized to communicate direct with the Provinces in respect of such external affairs.

I feel reasonably sure that if I were authorized to communicate direct with the Lieutenant-Governors, I should be able to get some sort of answer out of them.

(Sgd) Joseph Pope(1)

Ottawa, 18th September, 1915.

(Enclosed draft) -

To His Royal Highness the Governor-General-in-Council:

The undersigned, with a view to the more direct and expeditious despatch of public business, has the honour to recommend to Your Royal Highness that the Minute of the Privy Council, dated 16th February, 1880, laying down the procedure to be observed in the conduct of correspondence between the Government of Canada and those of the Provinces, be amended to provide that so much of this correspondence as relates to external affairs of the Dominion, be conducted by the Secretary of State for External Affairs direct with the Lieutenant-Governors.

Humbly submitted: -----

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Secretary of State for External Affairs. (2)

Ottawa, 18th September, 1915.

(1) File 666/12

(2) File 666/12