

mine Canada's position to-day in the field of international affairs. In 1919, the representatives of Canada signed the peace treaty as members of the British empire delegation, and nowhere is Canada's name to be found in the treaty. The theory at the time was expressed by Mr. Doherty in 1920 in the following words as reported at page 476 of *Hansard* of March 16, 1920:

The party for whom His Majesty is acting is the British empire, but His Majesty knows what it is that constitutes the empire and he therefore informed those with whom he was contracting that when he contracted for the British empire he did so on behalf of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, India, et cetera.

And he added:

In order that the treaty shall bind the British empire it is necessary that it shall be executed with the approval of all the self-governing nations of the British empire, and Canada is one of them.

It was a new departure and a step forward for which Sir Robert Borden deserved the praise paid to him by the present Prime Minister. But since those days Canada has moved forward. In 1922 for the first time Canada was, in its own name, party to a treaty, and for the first time the treaty was signed by a Canadian, Mr. Lapointe, in the name of Canada. It was not the subject matter concerned that made the treaty important to us, but the fact that another attribute of sovereignty, that of treaty-making, had been gained by Canada.

Then came the imperial conference of 1926. To do justice to all the enactments of this momentous gathering would necessitate more time than I can devote to it in this part of my remarks. Let it suffice to recall this most important passage of the report of the conference which paved the way for a new unwritten constitution of the British commonwealth. I quote from page 12 of the "Summary of Proceedings" of the imperial conference of 1926:

There is, however, one most important element in it which, from a strictly constitutional point of view, has now, as regards all vital matters, reached its full development—we refer to the group of self-governing communities composed of Great Britain and the dominions. Their position and mutual relation may be readily defined. They are autonomous communities within the British empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs though united by a common allegiance to the crown, and freely associated as members of the British commonwealth of nations.

This statement is a milestone, Mr. Speaker, on the road of our evolution, and consecrates a situation existing *de facto* for a certain time for the recognition of which there was needed only the demand from the interested parties.

{Mr. Picard.]

If I may add a personal note, I would say I was privileged to attend many sittings at the conference of 1926, and saw at work the leaders of all the nations of the commonwealth. Allow me to state that not only did I find Canada's representatives, who were the present Prime Minister, and the then minister of justice, the late Right Hon. Ernest Lapointe, an equal match for any of the representatives of Great Britain and the other dominions, but I considered that they played a most important role in shaping there the pattern of future relations within the commonwealth. Those who know the inside of the deliberations of the conference, as well as all those, especially in Great Britain, who have commented on the conference, have recognized that the Prime Minister of Canada in acting as a mediator, may I say, between the ultra-imperialist views expressed at that time in the name of Australia and New Zealand and the ultra-nationalist views of Ireland and South Africa, influenced more the outcome of the conference and the drafting of the report and conclusions of its meetings than any other statesmen present.

As to the part played by Mr. Lapointe, the house may be interested in hearing of an incident which occurred during one of the meetings of the conference. On coming back from each meeting the minister would bring to me a portfolio with all the documents he had received that day for consideration and study during the evening. I used to sort them, file them and bring them back for his attention when the time required it. One day I found a small piece of paper, of which I have a photostatic copy, which I realized was not in the handwriting of Mr. Lapointe. The note said:

It seems to me to be working very well in the direction of a general resolution of approval by all instead of ratification by some—unless Austen feels that he can persuade them all to ratification, which I confess I doubt after Lapointe and Hertzog.

Hertzog was then the leader of the South African delegation. The next day I went to No. 10 Downing street and inquired of a secretary as to whose handwriting this was, and discovered it was the handwriting of the Right Honourable A. Balfour, one of the British delegates at the time. Evidently he had passed it to his neighbour to show him it was better to accept simply approval, on account of the strong stand taken at the conference by Mr. Hertzog and Mr. Lapointe.

But some may say there is a margin between the enunciation of a doctrine and the subsequent adoption of practical procedures needed to apply it. Let me give you another incident which occurred in 1927, during the naval disarmament conference. At that time