

The first is set forth in the phrase, "Great Britain, to which we are subject"; in other words the assumption was that political subordination existed. The second assumption was, as I have indicated, that, given this political subordination, or conceivably, any political connection between Great Britain and Canada, the enemy, if he so desired and could do so, was entitled to attack Canada, and so Canada was at war.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier was not a man to set bounds to a nation's growth. He would have been the last to say that its future destinies must be guided by facts or phrases belonging to a political and constitutional position of a generation before, just as he would have been the last to say we should remain indifferent to Britain's destruction or the destruction of freedom in the world.

There have been great changes since 1910. The constitutional changes are most familiar. There has been an advance from colonial subordination to equal status, the substantial achievement of responsible government in external as well as in domestic affairs. It is a development which has saved the British empire and given a fruitful example to other peoples: it is a permanent tribute to the political genius, the practical sense, the ability to adapt and compromise, which characterize the peoples of the commonwealth, and it is, I think, generally recognized that it is a development in which Canadians have played the initiating and decisive part.

I need not do more than refer to the oft-quoted reference in the declaration of the imperial conference of 1926, to the position of Great Britain and the Dominions as "equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs," and to the specific developments which in recent years have illustrated and made definite that declaration—the changed position of the governor general, the right of extra-territorial legislation, the removal of the legislative control of the parliament of the United Kingdom save for constitutional changes so long as we desire that limitation, the modifications as to judicial appeals, the establishment of legations, representation at international conferences and in the League of Nations, the understanding that treaties between the king in respect of any part of the commonwealth and a foreign country are made on the advice of his ministers in that part.

But it is not only the constitutional position that has changed. Canada has grown from a country of seven to a country of eleven millions; its industries have expanded beyond anything earlier imagined; the devel-

opment of the mining areas of the north has turned what was a dividing waste into a source of national strength.

The world war has intervened, a war that set a boundary line between two periods in the life of mankind. Now we all know better what war means. No intelligent man or woman can assume that the world stands where it did in 1910 or in 1914-18. The war profoundly modified the balance of power both in the old world and in the new.

The development of aviation, and changes in industrial structure, have further modified the strategic situation. For the British commonwealth they have meant a diffusion of responsibility, a decentralization in defence, the greater importance of local defence and of alternative sources of raw materials, industrial supplies, and defence equipment. Perhaps the chief significance of the imperial conference of 1937 was the general recognition of that development.

But these momentous changes, changes in the world position, changes in political relationships, changes in the defence situation, even the changes in the constitutional relations between the members of the commonwealth, do not necessarily alter the formal and legal position, the position which undoubtedly existed a generation ago, that Canada was automatically a belligerent if the United Kingdom was.

A legal situation can be changed in one of two ways, by the gradual and decisive overriding of the old letter of the law by established constitutional conventions, or by definite action by the legislative authorities which have the power to act. There are many points upon which the old legal position has been modified and made obsolete by the gradual development of divergent practice, by the steady accumulation of precedent, until the new situation has been decisively established by tacit recognition or as in 1926 by formal recital.

There is no general agreement that such is the case as regards war time relationship. Legal experts still differ as to the conclusions that may be drawn as to the divisibility or indivisibility of the crown, and as to the range of the effect of advice tendered to the sovereign by his ministers in the United Kingdom alone. The reason why constitutional conventions have not brought clarity and agreement in this matter of war relationship is the simple and fortunate reason that no part of the commonwealth has engaged in any war in the past twenty years, aside from minor border raids, and consequently there has been no testing of practice, no accumulation of precedent.