

The Canadian Representative at Washington

By J. A. STEVENSON

SIR GEORGE FOSTER, the Acting Premier of Canada, recently made the interesting announcement in the Federal House at Ottawa that the British and Canadian governments have concluded an arrangement whereby Canadian interests at Washington would be provided with more satisfactory representation than hitherto has been available.

Until a very recent date if Ottawa wished to transact business with Washington, it had to operate by a most roundabout route through the Governor-General of Canada, who communicated the business to the British Colonial Office. The latter passed it on to the Foreign Office, who then communicated with the British Embassy at Washington, and at length after many weary weeks the United States Government was reached.

During the later stages of the war many of these antiquated formalities were relaxed and there was a certain measure of direct intercourse between Ottawa and Washington, but in the eyes of the British official hierarchy it was quite improper. However, Canadian national sentiment has thrived greatly since 1914. The exploits of the Canadian army and the magnitude of the national war effort have roused in the people a new sense of confidence and pride and it is generally agreed that there is no department of national life which Canadians cannot manage for themselves better than other people can manage for them.

Canada and the other British dominions occupy strangely anomalous positions. They are national states in strength and self-consciousness but in form and status are still colonial dependencies. Britain lost her first empire by the fatal folly of George V and Lord North, and a hundred years ago apart from her Indian holdings and several tropical islands, she could point to only a few scattered settlements in the vast territory which she had brought under her flag.

The colonists were engaged in a desperate struggle with the wilderness; they were absolutely under the control of Downing Street; their governors were mostly generals with bad livers and tempers, and their officials were the needy scions of aristocratic families. Their affairs were invariably managed in the interests of the mother country and in return British taxpayers were good enough to bear the cost of their defense. The wishes of the colonists were rarely consulted, and engaged as the latter were in an absorbing conflict with nature, they had scant time for political thought and organization.

But when the pioneers had surmounted their worst struggles and settlement became thicker, they became conscious of their disabilities and the old British sense of liberty asserted itself. There came a political awakening and a demand for responsible government. It required an actual rebellion in Canada, in 1837, headed by William Lyon Mackenzie, grandfather of Mackenzie King, the present leader of Canadian Liberals, to bring matters to a head. The rebellion was suppressed but it educated the British Government to the fact that unless timely changes were made their later empire would go the way of the first.

The steps were gradual; first, the Dominions began to make their own financial arrangements and tariffs; next, they assumed responsibility for their own defense; they began later on to regulate their immigration policy and to negotiate treaties through their own plenipotentiaries, as in the case of the Taft-Fielding reciprocity pact of 1911.

Other milestones of constitutional development were passed during the war years. The Canadian premier and other ministers were accorded places in the Imperial War Cabinet on a parity with British ministers and Canada was accorded separate representation at the Peace Conference and in the League of Nations. American Senators and others who saw in this step a Machiavellian scheme on the part of the British statesmen to secure additional votes for the British people err profoundly. The hierarchy of the British Foreign Office made no secret of their confidence in their capacity to look after the foreign affairs

of the Dominions and it was only the determined insistence of Sir Robert Borden and General Smuts which won the right of separate representation.

Last September one of the Canadian delegates, Mr. Sifton, publicly stated in the House at Ottawa that separate representation was secured for the Dominions only because of the opposition of the most conservative elements in Britain. If the old principle of giving the Dominions what powers they wanted had not been adhered to, the Dominion delegates would probably have shaken the dust of Paris off their feet and a serious crisis would have arisen. But the British Imperialists do not like these new claims of the Dominions. They hanker after some form of an Imperial centralized Parliament, which will give them a chance of controlling the daughter states.

The supporters of Imperial Federation are cherishing an impossible dream. It has been repudiated by all the responsible statesmen in the Dominions and any government which proposed it would have no chance of survival. The ties of common laws, traditions, cus-

oms and language between Britain and her daughter states are strong and deep, but so intense is the new national consciousness in each of them that they will resolutely decline to enter into any binding political arrangements which might hamper their freedom of action. In an Imperial Parliament the dominating majority for many years would be drawn from the mother country.

So far from showing a willingness to continue in a state of indefinite subordination, the Canadian people are anxious to extend their autonomous powers, and the appointment of a special Canadian minister at Washington is a step in this direction. He will take charge of ordinary Canadian affairs and will act as the normal channel of communication between the Canadian and American governments in matters solely pertaining to Canada,

trade between Canada and the United States was in the last fiscal year twice as much as the commerce between Great Britain and Canada and for the first time in many years Canada exported more goods to the United States than to the mother country. She is dependent on her southern neighbor for large quantities of coal and coke to supply her central areas as well as much raw material for industries which are coalless. Americans, on the other hand, are more and more becoming dependent on Canada for their supplies of newsprint and pulpwood and the move which Senator Underwood has initiated to secure the abrogation of the restrictions of the Canadian provinces upon the export of pulpwood grown on crown lands is regarded as a provocative interference with the domestic affairs of another country and might, if pressed, give rise to a delicate situation.

Water rights on the rivers and streams which form or cross the international boundary give rise to continual disputes in regard to water power and irrigation schemes. In the near future, through the acquisition of the Grand Trunk Railway and its subsidiaries, the Canadian Government will own a large railway mileage under the Stars and Stripes, and its operation may give rise to complicated problems.

There is a continual exodus of American farmers northward to the cheaper lands of the Canadian Northwest and a counter exodus southward of people who dislike the Canadian winter or want a change of occupation or residence. In fact the balance in migration is in favor of the United States who in the last eleven years received almost 200,000 more people from Canada than they sent to her.

But the sense of the deep community of interest between the two countries is daily growing and proofs are visible on every side. The American Federation of Labor, which has the allegiance of most Canadian unions, meets in Montreal on June 7, and on May 12 representatives of the Canadian Council of Agriculture and the National Board of Farm Organizations of the United States met in Chicago to discuss the establishment of an international board of agriculture. Under such conditions, need of direct diplomatic intercourse between the two great democracies of North America has become absolutely imperative.

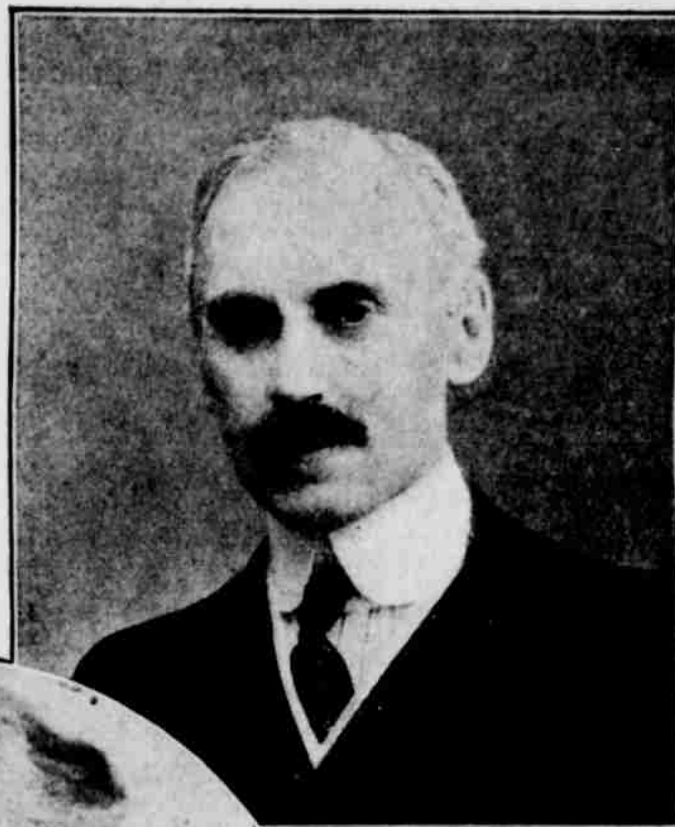
There is general agreement in Canada that she must not be represented in this experiment by anybody of inferior standing or quality. The name of Sir Charles Gordon, a leading manufacturer and financier of Montreal who had charge of the Canadian Mission at Washington during the war, receives wide support in business circles but he has had no political experience and would probably be unwilling to give up his very extensive business enterprises for a diplomatic career.

Sir J. D. Hazen, the Chief Justice of New Brunswick, who was Minister of Marine and Fisheries in the first Borden Cabinet, has some supporters but his abilities and standing are scarcely commensurate with the post.

A generally acceptable selection would be Mr. C. A. Magrath, the senior Canadian representative on the Joint International Commission. Mr. Magrath has had peculiar experience for the position; he had a successful business career as manager of the Southern Alberta Irrigation Company and served for a term as a Conservative member of the House of Commons. If he had stayed in politics he would long ago have been in the Dominion Cabinet. But his views were in advance of his party and he preferred the independence of his present position. He enjoys general popularity and esteem in Canada and did excellent service during the war as Fuel Controller for Canada. This business as well as his duties on the Joint Commission have made him a frequent visitor at Washington and he has a first-class knowledge of the United States.

But Canada may be able to send an even more illustrious personage as her first Minister to Washington. Sir Robert Borden, the Canadian Premier, has just returned to Ottawa after a prolonged holiday at southern health resorts, where he was trying to recover from a serious breakdown in health, the result of his exertions during the war. While he is much improved by his rest, it is considered doubtful if his physicians will allow him to resume the arduous duties of the premiership.

If he is compelled or decides to retire, an effort will probably be made to induce him to inaugurate the Canadian Ministry at Washington and as he is by no means an old man, he may be willing to accept it. While his domestic policy does not command universal approval, all parties have confidence in the soundness of his views upon foreign affairs and his appointment will be acclaimed as exceedingly satisfactory. It is understood that he was offered the British embassy in 1919 but declined to accept it. If he went to Washington now the British Government would probably pay him the compliment of withdrawing Sir Auckland Geddes and entrusting all their interests to his experienced supervision.



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SIR ROBERT BORDEN

receiving his instructions from and reporting direct to the Cabinet at Ottawa. In the absence of the British Ambassador, the Canadian minister will automatically assume charge of the British embassy and attend to Imperial as well as Canadian interests. Though Sir George Foster took pains to assert that the step did not affect the diplomatic unity of the British Commonwealth, yet it obviously constitutes a far-reaching innovation and it will not be popular in Imperialist circles in England where it will be asked if this sort of thing will not end in complete independence.

There is no criticism in Canada of the step itself but objection has been raised both inside and outside Parliament to the fact that this important departure was arranged by secret negotiations between the

British and Canadian governments and Parliament was not consulted.

But, generally speaking, the new ministry meets a growing desire on the part of the Canadian people. Often in the past it has been brought home to them that however brilliant and capable the staff of the British embassy might be, they were always Englishmen and primarily concerned with English interests. The charge was often brought that they were always ready to sacrifice Canadian interests to pacify the American State Department and the memory of the Alaska boundary decision when Lord Alverstone, the British representative, voted with the American delegates against the Canadian claims, still rankles. Again during the war the British Government deliberately preferred to interpret its case through its own emissaries rather than through Canadians whose services were proffered and who had an infinitely better acquaintance with America and her viewpoint.

The need for easy and direct relations between the two countries was never greater. The total volume of



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