

JOHN W. DAFOE AND THE EVOLUTION OF
CANADIAN AUTONOMY, 1918 - 1926

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FOREWORD

The original intention of this work was a study of the influence of John W. Dafoe on Canadian external relations during the period after the close of the war of 1914-18, until the publication of the Report of the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of the Imperial Conference of 1926. After looking into the material available on that subject it was found that, during the period in question, practically everything Dafoe wrote or said on Canadian external relations was directed towards the goal of achieving complete Canadian autonomy within the British Empire. Therefore, the topic was changed to conform with that fact.

Because the Manitoba Free Press kept no records, until 1928, as to the authorship of the editorials it printed, there can be no definite guarantee as to whether or not they were written by Dafoe. The author has been assured, however, by Mr. Grant Dexter, the present Executive Editor of the Winnipeg Free Press, who has been connected with that paper since 1919, that no editorial was printed on the subject of external affairs or Canadian autonomy other than those, either written by Dafoe himself, or, in the event that he was rushed for time, dictated by him to another member of the editorial staff, whose sole duty it was to put a final polish to 'the Chief's' article. In order to make certain that no discrepancies would creep in because of the absence of Dafoe from his editorial desk, however, the author has made no use of editorial material printed during Dafoe's long absences from Winnipeg, unless the article showed such unmistakable evidence of his forceful style that

Manchester Guardian or the Springfield Republican.¹ Dafoe's knowledge of the constitutional history of this period has been referred to by another highly regarded authority as "unrivalled."² There can be no doubt that the Free Press, through the most important forty years of its growth, attained its great reputation because of the liberalmindedness and effort of its outstanding editor, John W. Dafoe.

The writer is grateful to Mr. J.L. Johnston, of the Provincial Library of Manitoba and to Miss Ruth Bugey, of the Winnipeg Free Press library, and their staffs, for their interest and generous assistance in the preparation of this study. He is also deeply indebted to Mr. Grant Dexter of the Winnipeg Free Press, who gave generously of his time, and for granting his permission to read and use the Dafoe Correspondence. He is especially grateful to Professor W.L. Morton, without whose judicious guidance and constant encouragement this study could not have been undertaken. Thanks are also due to Mr. Boris Margolis, who read the manuscript and made many valuable suggestions.

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1. Hugh Ll. Keenleyside, Canada and the United States, (New York, 1929) p. 219.
 2. R.M. Dawson, The Development of Dominion Status, 1900-36, (London, 1937) p. vii.

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CHAPTER I

AN UPSURGE OF NATIONALISTIC FEELING

The struggle for Dominion autonomy did not actually begin as a result of Canadian participation in the war of 1914-18. It was a far more deeply rooted desire. One might venture the opinion that the campaign for national status in Canada began with the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists; for many of these immigrants arrived in Canada from former British colonies which had enjoyed a high degree of autonomy and freedom of action and they desired to transplant these privileges to their new home. It was not long after Confederation that Canada had complete internal autonomy, as well as a certain degree of external freedom of action, for towards the latter years of the nineteenth century Canada began to negotiate her own commercial treaties with foreign countries and soon the signature of the British Ambassador to those treaties and agreements became little more than a mere formality. He had by this time ceased to play any part in the negotiations themselves.

But the effort engendered by Canadian participation in the war gave rise to a more intense nationalism. More Canadians began to agree with the advanced political thinkers who held that if a country could participate in a war on an equal footing with other nations, then that country could not be considered inferior in any way to any of her partners. Although the Canadian contribution to the war effort was not as great numerically as that of Great Britain, France, or Russia, many Canadians sincerely believed that Canada's proportionate effort was every bit as valuable as the effort of the other major Powers. It was learned

soon after hostilities that total Canadian battle casualties¹ were nearly as high as those of the United States,² while there were nearly 15,000 more Canadians killed in action during the war than there were Americans. Other figures available indicate a higher figure for Canadian killed by more than 5,000 additional deaths³ and it may be assumed that while the first figure mentioned was that of the deaths in the Canadian Army Corps, the second figure would include all deaths including those of Canadians serving with the Imperial forces as well.⁴ Thus the people at home felt that, if their contribution to the war effort was as great as that of a major Power, their world standing should be recognized accordingly. The attitude of the advanced thinker was ably expressed by Clifford Sifton soon after the outbreak of hostilities. He had communicated his opinion in a letter to a friend: "Canada should do her whole duty and in doing it perhaps she will find the national soul which of late has seemed sometimes to be lacking."⁵

Canada did do her duty in the war, but not merely because she was a part of the British Empire. She participated as a nation in her own right; and she participated of her own free will. From the outset there were elements within the country which refused to support active Canadian belligerency as a part of the

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1. Canadian Annual Review, (hereafter referred to as C.A.R.) 1918, p. 364.
 2. Report of General Pershing on United States Army casualties up to Nov. 18, 1918; C.A.R., 1918, p. 226.
 3. Round Table, Sept., 1924, p. 650.
 4. There were approximately 52,000 Canadian soldiers serving as part of, or otherwise attached to, the Imperial Armies; C.A.R., 1918, pp. 377-88.
 5. John W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, (Toronto, 1931) p. 388.

British Empire but preferred to make their decision on the merits of the case. Dafoe was one of these. On hearing of the world situation in a telegram dated July 31, 1914, from Clifford Sifton, Dafoe had noted that the policy of the Free Press would be not to commit itself on participation in the war.⁶ It was not until the situation became more clear to him, after the original shock of having seen a world war erupt had subsided, that he decided to bend his effort to the wholehearted prosecution of the war.

The Canadian Government also asserted its freedom from outside control. Laurier in the past had often stated that should Britain be at war, Canada too would be at war. That was right and proper. However, his statement went further. Canada, he claimed, would indicate herself to what extent she would participate. The result of this belief was seen when the British Government tried to requisition Canadian ships for war purposes. The Canadian Cabinet promptly protested the act, saying that, although the British Government might be able legally to requisition Canadian ships, constitutionally this could not be done by the Crown without the advice of the Canadian Government.⁷

As the war progressed Canadian nationalism became stronger. Although the entire national effort was directed to the end of a successful conclusion to the war, Canada's contribution still did not resemble a truly Canadian effort. The senior commanders of

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6. On the wire the words "do not commit yourself on participation in the war," are written in Dafoe's handwriting, presumably as an immediate note, meant either as a reply to Sifton or as a policy for himself; Unpublished papers of John W. Dafoe, (hereafter referred to as Dafoe Papers) Jul., 31, 1914, Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.
 7. R.M. Dawson, The Development of Dominion Status, 1900-36, (Toronto, 1937) pp. 17-8.

the Canadian armed forces were not Canadians. Neither were many of the officers of lower rank. They were British. So were many of the instructional personnel both at home and abroad. And the alleged incompetence of many of the leading British officers of the Canadian Army Corps, up to the highest level, was often criticized by responsible Canadians in influential positions. Sifton had written of Alderson,⁸ as "a most ordinary mediocrity. . . Turner, Currie, Mercer, or Dave Watson, anyone of them are worth a dozen of him. . . Our force should have been officered, commanded and administered as a Canadian force -- if it had been there would have been several thousand less casualties. . . Now I want you to open up."⁹

And open up Dafoe did. The resultant campaign carried on in the editorial columns of the Free Press was to assist in remedying a bad situation. During the following weeks many an editorial appeared criticizing the administration of the Canadian Army Corps and the Canadian place in the war. Dafoe believed the existing situation to be a result of Canada's inferiority of status, and her lack of recognition by the Powers. He wrote: "Canada, we cannot but think, would have done better for herself and for the cause of the Allies if from the very beginning she had gone into this war as a principal, not as an assistant; as a nation, not as a colony."¹⁰ It was not long after that that Dafoe's thought on the matter progressed even further. One year later he openly insisted that Canada was in the war as a principal. At the Western Liberal convention, held in Winnipeg at the end of

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8. Commander of the Canadian Army Corps, replaced shortly thereafter by General Byng.
 9. Dafoe Papers, May 12, 1916, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.
 10. Manitoba Free Press, (hereafter referred to as M.F.P.) Jun. 22, 1916, "Canadians and the War."

July, 1917, the editor of the Free Press submitted a draft resolution, which was later drastically revised by a committee of the convention, in which he insisted on that very point. The original draft resolution later appeared in the editorial page of the Free Press, and began thus: "We hold that Canada's participation in the war is that of a principal and that her obligations and privileges, both in the waging of war and the determination of peace are identical in character with those of her sister nations and allies."¹¹ Still later, in reconsidering his thoughts about that earlier period, he observed that those who accepted conscription as a symbol of loyalty to the cause of the war were the people "who believed that Canada was in the war as a principal."¹² The active campaign for conscription carried out in the editorial pages of the Free Press both before and after the formation of Union Government therefore would indicate just where Dafoe stood on this matter. Canada had gone into the war on her own, for her own reasons, and not "to oblige or assist any other nation."¹³ Commenting on the success of the Union Government and of the conscription issue in the election of that year, Sir Clifford Sifton wrote from England that "The man who is entitled to the principal credit of the whole movement and its results, is undoubtedly Dafoe, who grasped the whole situation very clearly from the beginning, never lost his courage, and from his editorial chair directly dominated the situation."¹⁴

The accomplishments of Canadians overseas, both statesmen and soldiers, gave good cause for a growing, if perhaps exaggerated

11. M.F.P., Aug. 22, 1917, "An Explanation."

12. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton, p. 406.

13. Ibid; see also below, p. 13.

14. Dafoe Papers, Feb. 6, 1918, Sir Clifford Sifton to G.W. Allen, K.C., M.P.

national pride. Sir Robert Borden, while on a visit to Britain in 1915, was hono^ured with an invitation to attend a British Cabinet meeting. This was the first time such a privilege had ever been granted to a colonial.¹⁵ At the same time Canadian soldiers, through their achievements both on the land and in the air, were already making the name of Canada a byword amongst the fighting men of the nations of both the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. By the middle of 1917 they had distinguished themselves in such bloody and famous engagements as Ypres, St. Eloi, Courcellette, the Somme battles, Vimy Ridge, and Arras, and their numbers had risen to approximately 414,000 men.¹⁶ In addition, the Canadians in the Royal Flying Corps had begun to make a name for themselves.¹⁷ Men like Bishop, Hobbs, Mulock and Knight were amongst the leading aces of the Allied nations. The Canadians had taken to the air as the British took to the sea.¹⁸ And the command of the Canadian Army Corps was now given to a Canadian officer, Sir Arthur Currie.¹⁹

It was about this time that a new era of Imperial relationships began to emerge. Canada was not alone in such contributions to the military effort of the Empire. All parts of the Empire had been co-operating on a similar basis, although the Canadian forces were the only ones which were being used exclusively in Europe. In accordance with an offer made in December of 1912, Britain indicated a willingness to keep the Dominions informed as to the

15. Dawson, Dominion Status, p. 19.

16. C.A.R., 1917, p. 338.

17. By the end of the War more than 8,000 of the commissioned officers of the Royal Flying Corps were Canadians; C.A.R., 1918, p. 388.

18. C.A.R., 1917, p. 539.

19. The first Canadian appointed to the command of the Canadian Army; General Currie succeeded General Byng on June 19, 1917.

progress of the war. The Canadian Government had been keeping in touch with the British Government through the medium of Sir George Perley, the Minister of Overseas Forces, who was also the Acting High Commissioner for Canada.²⁰ It was recognized that this plan for keeping the Dominions informed as to the plans of the Mother Country was likely to lead to further centralization of the Empire. Dafoe rebelled against this possibility. On July 1, 1916, the Free Press protested against any "surrender of our freedom to determine, under all circumstances our course in the world."²¹ Later during the same month the paper was found to be "passionately devoted to the vital maintenance of the solidarity of the British Empire, and an exponent of the free or Liberal theory of Empire. It was opposed to federation or consolidation, to an Imperial Council or Parliament, to any Central body, representative or otherwise, to any tightening of bonds which 'left loose have proven stronger than iron.'"²²

Nevertheless, notwithstanding such attacks, the requirements of war at that time were found to be more important than any assertions of Canadian autonomy. For the time being, at least, there would be a central control over Imperial policy, against which Dafoe could do little other than advise caution in assuming commitments on the part of the Dominions.

The fact that the Dominions were soon to be accepted as co-managers of the war effort was obvious after the beginning of February, 1917. On February 8, 1917, Lord Curzon, in reference to contributions to the war effort by the Dominions, addressed the House of Lords as follows: "We therefore now regard them as

20. Dawson, Dominion Status, p. 19.

21. Quoted in C.A.R., 1916, p. 418.

22. Ibid.

being entitled to a voice in the prosecution of the war to the end which we contemplate, also to arrange the settlement of the terms of peace."²³

Dafoe himself was ever awake to the requirements of the situation as well as to the limits to which co-operation should be permitted to extend. In October of 1916 he wrote to a correspondent:

I cannot see that there is any satisfactory solution of this problem other than that of the co-operation of all the British Dominions on the basis of nations and not of provinces. . . . We cannot be a nation in Canada if we are simply a province of the Empire. . . . A permanent alliance of British nations dedicated to the cause of civilization and progress appears to me to be a sublime conception, but this project of a centralized empire, adjusted to a symmetrical pattern, with a strong probability that it would become militarized, not only leaves me cold, but actually fills me with deep apprehensions that this proposition, if carried out, would ruin the race./²⁴

It would seem, however, that Lloyd George's original intention was not one of taking the Dominions in as equal partners in the war effort. This he was forced to do in order to carry out some of his own policies. On assuming office in 1916, he had attempted to dismiss those who he thought responsible for the inefficiency in the British High Command. To his dismay he found that these same people had so much influence in high circles that he could not bring his newly-formed War Cabinet to agree. Thus, "it was for the purpose of strengthening his hand in dealing with the situation that he had summoned the Dominion Ministers to the Imperial War Cabinet."²⁵ This newly formed Imperial War Cabinet

23. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, p. 200.

24. Dafoe Papers, Oct. 16, 1916, Dafoe to G.M. Wrong.

25. Henry Borden, ed., Robert Laird Borden, His Memoirs, II, (Toronto, 1938) p. 827.

first met in London during March and April of 1917.²⁶

This "Cabinet of Governments"²⁷ was to have wide and sweeping powers. Evidently there was a large element of centralist thought in its planning. In effect, it was to be an "Executive Cabinet for the Empire" whose duties would be the making of decisions on "all matters which [were] essential for the prosecution of the War, including questions of foreign policy, of the provision of troops and munitions and of War finance. It [would] settle Imperial policy as to the terms of peace. It [would] consider those important problems which [were] certain to be the pressing legacy of the War."²⁸ However, because of the conditions of secrecy under which the Imperial War Cabinet met, little was known, outside of government circles, about its deliberations, and for that reason little was written about it in the newspapers of the Empire.

The Imperial War Conference met in London about the same time and held its sessions on alternate days with the War Cabinet, the first meeting being held on March 21, 1917. It was at this Conference that any Centralist plans which might have existed in the minds of the organizers were promptly and properly submerged in a sea of Dominion autonomy. Sir Robert Borden, recognizing the possible implications of the occurrences in London, took advantage of an opportunity and moved and secured the passage of

26. C.A.R., 1917, p. 206, gives the opening date of the Cabinet sessions as Mar. 20, 1917, whereas Sir Robert Borden, in his Memoirs, II, p. 677, gives the date of the first meeting as Mar. 2, 1917; Dawson, Dominion Status, pp. 21-2, gives the date as Mar. 20, 1917.

27. So referred to by Borden while addressing the Empire Parliamentary Association at London, June 21, 1918; quoted by A.B. Keith, Speeches and Documents on the British Dominions, 1918-31, (London, 1938) p. 5; see below, p. 10.

28. London Times, Mar. 21, 1917; quoted in C.A.R., 1917, p. 206.

the well known Resolution Nine of the Conference. That was designed to lead towards equality of nationhood for the Dominions and India, with the United Kingdom, and provided the organization and the machinery which was later to be the British Empire delegation to the peace conference.²⁹ That one act was to prove to be the outstanding accomplishment of the conference,³⁰ in that it provided the legal precedent for the modern development of the British Empire.

The following year both the Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference met for the second time at London. The first meeting of the Cabinet was held on June 11, and it sat over two months before it had completed its business. Here again Borden stressed the autonomy of the Dominions. Addressing the Empire Parliamentary Association on June 21,³¹ he said in part:

If I should attempt to describe it, I should say it is a Cabinet of Governments. Every Prime Minister who sits around that board is responsible to his own Parliament and to his own people; the conclusions of the War Cabinet can only be carried out by the Parliaments of the different nations of our Imperial Commonwealth. Thus, each Dominion, each nation, retains its perfect autonomy. I venture to believe, and I thus expressed myself last year, that in this may be found the genesis of a development in [the] constitutional relations of the Empire, which will form the basis of its unity in the years to come.

This second War Cabinet met before the great offensive of August of that year and as a result its main objective was to discover some means of bringing the war to a rapid and successful conclusion. Hence the major part of its discussions tended to be of a purely military nature. As far as Canada was concerned,

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29. G.P. de T. Glazebrook, Canada at the Paris Peace Conference, Canadian Institute of International Affairs, (hereafter referred to as C.I.I.A.) (Toronto, 1942) pp. 22-3.
30. Dawson, Dominion Status, p. 25.
31. See above, p. 9.

however, it did come to two decisions which further strengthened the Canadian claim for complete national autonomy. By a statement issued by Borden at Ottawa on August 24, 1918, the Canadian public was informed that the Cabinet had decided to make the Canadian Army Organization independent of the British Army internally, but externally it was still to remain under the supreme command of Haig and Foch. In addition, a Canadian Air Force was decided upon³² which would work in co-operation with the Canadian Army. In the meantime Canadian airmen, who formed a large part of the British Air Force, were to enjoy special recognition as Canadians.³³

Dafoe saw the result of the decisions of the Imperial War Cabinets and Conferences as a new principle emerging as the governing factor of inter-Imperial relations. That was the principle of equality of status, of nations "joined in a partnership of consent." He developed this further.

Equality does not permit of qualification. You are equal or you are not. The next step which I presume will be taken by the Constitutional Conference when it meets shortly will be to make that equality a matter of formal affirmation. . . It is desirable that the definition should be made with the least possible delay. . . I could, I think, demonstrate that we can not go forward with any large schemes of co-operation until the present somewhat indefinite status is cleared up and replaced by an understanding which will make clear not only to ourselves but to the outside world that the British Empire is a partnership of equal nations united in a partnership of consent. /34

That was the line of discussion he followed until the end of 1926. Thus he stuck to his guns until his victory was complete.

32. Until this time the Canadian aviators were members of the Royal Flying Corps.

33. C.A.R., 1918, p. 419.

34. J.W. Dafoe, Aug. 6, 1920, Empire Partnership, An address to the Imperial Press Conference.

By the time the information about the reorganization of the Canadian forces was released the war was drawing rapidly to a close. The armies of the Germanic Alliance were crumbling on the Eastern Front. The Turks were being soundly defeated and the German armies in the west were being broken and forced to retreat. There were internal disturbances within all of the enemy countries and it became obvious that they could not resist much longer. American troops were arriving overseas in ever-increasing numbers and provided the reinforcements which the Allies so sorely lacked during the few months previous. But the Dominions too could look on their accomplishments with pride.

The Dominion contribution in the war. . . was almost of decisive importance. The Dominions put more men in the field and suffered heavier losses than any but the major Powers. The Canadian Army, which represented the military effort of eight million people, lost more men than did the American Army. Naval forces were developed; heavy contributions were made to the Royal Flying Corps;³⁵ and Canada, in particular, became a great base for the production of supplies.³⁶

The consummation of the Dominions' efforts was on the visible horizon.

35. See above, p. 6.

36. Gwendolen M. Carter, The British Commonwealth and International Security; The Role of the Dominions, 1919-39, C.I.I.A., (Toronto, 1947) p. xvi.

CHAPTER II

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Canada, more than any other participant in the war, was actuated by unmixd altruistic motives. She desired nothing, had nothing to hope for, except to share in the security which would be the consequence of the removal from the world of the menace of Prussian militarism and the vindication of the principles of democratic government. Canada drew her sword. . . and her immense effort, continued unflinchingly until the day of victory, was put forward from a strong sense of duty and not from any hope whatever of reward./1

Canada stood to gain nothing when she entered the war. But with her victory she achieved much more than mere security or material gain. She had sought neither security nor booty. There were no lands conquered which Canada coveted, nor was Canada herself insecure on the western side of the Atlantic Ocean, before the day of the long-distance bombing aeroplane. What Canada did win as a result of her participation in the war was practically universal recognition as an international person in her own right.

The striking and effective military contribution of Canada to the victory of the Allies was practically wholly responsible for that advancement in Canadian international status. Not only did Canadian troops make a name for themselves during the early years of the War, but they also had a more than proportionate share in the victories achieved by the Allied forces during the offensive of the last one hundred days. The Canadian Army Corps, maintained at full strength, were used as the shock troops of the Allied attack, and between August 8 and October 2 it had "met and defeated forty-seven German divisions, or one-quarter of the

1. M.F.P., Oct. 3, 1919, "Demanding Special Consideration."

German Army on the Western front,"² and in the course of those major advances it "took more than one-third of the guns and at least one-quarter of the prisoners."³

This was the principal diplomatic card that Sir Robert Borden had to play when he sailed for England in early November of 1918. As the representative of Canada to the Third Imperial War Cabinet he was to have the backing of the deeds of his countrymen in the field of battle. No stronger support could be sought. And Borden sailed with the full intention of securing for the Dominions separate representation in all the peace negotiations. The fact that the Dominions would be represented at the peace conference was already well established. It was an accepted fact that they would have a voice on the British Empire delegation. Lord Curzon had already stated as much in an address to the House of Lords.⁴ It was, however, never the intention of the British authorities to grant plenipotentiary powers to the separate Dominions. They were all to be represented within the British Empire delegation and in that manner preserve the diplomatic unity of the Empire. The fact that the Dominions were not to have a full voice in the forthcoming developments was quite evident by the treatment handed out to Prime Minister Hughes of Australia. Although he was in London when the German Army collapsed and the Imperial Cabinet was not in session he was not consulted on the acceptance of Wilson's Fourteen Points. In the light of the fact that the pre-Armistice conference included representatives of such countries as Greece and Portugal Mr. Hughes

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2. Dafoe Papers; Memorandum from Sir Arthur Currie to Sir Robert Borden, Nov. 26, 1918; copy given to Dafoe by Borden.
 3. Ibid.
 4. See above, pp. 7-8.

felt grossly insulted. Yet, in reply to his protests, the British Government merely stated that it was their intention not to consult the Dominions regarding the armistice, but rather to consult them on the terms of peace.⁵

Thus the Canadian participation in the making of the peace may be divided into four distinct phases. It would begin with the efforts at securing separate representation for all the self-governing parts of the Empire. Secondly, the actual work done by Canada in the peace negotiations should be considered, even though Canada, as a small Power, was able to contribute only a small amount. Thirdly, the controversy over signature and ratification of the finished treaty must be dealt with. Each of these events had its own effect on the evolution of Canadian autonomy. And finally, the significance of these events on the development of Canada must be considered.

1. Securing Separate Dominion Representation

The possibility that the British Government would attempt to forestall separate Dominion representation was not unforeseen by the Canadian authorities. It was for that reason that Dafoe insisted that Canada's "privileges" in the determination of peace were "identical" with those of all other nations.⁶ Borden, too, foresaw the possibility of a British attempt to eliminate the Dominions from the peace negotiations. On receipt of the invitation from Lloyd George to come to London to attend the sessions of the Third Imperial War Cabinet he replied, in part:

There is need of serious consideration as to representation of the Dominions in the peace negotiation. The press and people of this country take

5. Dawson, Dominion Status, p.30.

6. M.F.P., Aug. 22, 1917, "An Explanation;" See above pp. 4-5.

it for granted that Canada will be represented at the Peace Conference. I appreciate possible difficulties as to the representation of the Dominions but hope you will keep in mind that certainly a very unfortunate impression would be created and possibly a dangerous feeling might be aroused if these difficulties are not overcome by some solution which will meet the national spirit of the Canadian people. . . . In a word [the Canadian Council] feels that new conditions must be met by new precedents./7

Sir Robert was not the only Canadian delegate to express such an opinion. At a considerably earlier date Hon. C.J. Doherty had said as much, although not in such definitive terms. As far back as 1915 he made the statement that although the protected colony "was rightly voiceless," the "participating nation" could not remain so.⁸

Borden's message arrived too late. Without considering the wishes of the Dominions Lloyd George already had agreed to the decision of the Supreme Council that the British Empire be represented at the Peace Conference by five delegates. "The fact was that Sir Robert and his party left on the shortest possible notice. . . . At that time it was expected that the allied principals would begin almost immediately their consideration of the terms of the preliminary peace."⁹ Under such an arrangement it would have been impossible for each of the Dominions to be represented. Thus the British Dominions, which had contributed so extensively towards the winning of the war, were not to be represented whilst other small Powers, whose military efforts had been either negligible or non-existent, were to be

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7. Borden, Memoirs, Borden to Lloyd George, Oct., 29, 1918, II, p. 891.
 8. Round Table, V, p. 428; quoted in W.K. Hancock, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, I, (London, 1937) p. 65.
 9. J.W. Dafoe, Maclean's Magazine, May, 1919, "Canada at the Peace Conference."

represented by separate delegations. That was a situation which the Dominions could not tolerate.

Although Borden was offered the fifth place in the British delegation, as the representative of the Dominions, he declined.¹⁰ He felt that he could not properly represent the interests of the other Dominions,¹¹ and it was his intention from the beginning that the Dominions should be represented at the Peace Conference by their own plenipotentiaries. Speaking to Dafoe about the situation¹² he said, "I am going down to the War Cabinet today and tell them as politely and firmly as I can that the Canadian delegation will either go on to the Peace Conference or go home."¹³ After he had made his views known to the Cabinet, "Balfour said, in effect: 'Once the demand is made it must be conceded.'" This prompt reply on the part of the Foreign Secretary must have created considerable surprise at the meeting; for as nationalistic as they were the members of the Canadian delegation did not believe that Borden's request would be granted. When the Canadian Prime Minister had informed his colleagues of the "strong attitude" which he proposed to adopt, Sir George Foster had expressed doubt about its possibilities for success;¹⁴ and only twelve days before Borden had made his request Sir Clifford Sifton had written that he thought the Dominions would have no representation. "I rather expected that they would get the cold shoulder but hardly that it would

10. C.A.R., 1919, p. 76.

11. Dafoe, "Canada at the Peace Conference."

12. Dafoe attended the session of the Third Imperial War Cabinet and the Peace Conference in behalf of the Canadian Department of Public Information and as such was a member of the Canadian delegation.

13. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 9, 1926, Dafoe to O.D. Skelton.

14. Borden, Memoirs, II, p. 888.

be so soon or so obvious. . . . 'The Moor has done his work,
the Moor can go' in the words of Goethe."¹⁵

However, even at that stage of the negotiations Borden had not yet demanded complete and separate delegations to represent each Dominion at the peace negotiations. What he had in mind at that point was a panel which would include the Dominion Prime Ministers. In his own words:

To provide that Canada should be called in only when her special interests were concerned would be little better than a mockery. It would be regarded as most unfortunate if the British delegation should be selected entirely from the British Isles. . . and I urged that it should be selected from a panel upon which each Prime Minister from the Dominions should have a place and that one or more of those Prime Ministers should be called from time to time to sit in the delegation representing the whole Empire at the Conference. . . . Cook and Hughes supported me; Lloyd George agreed./¹⁶

Just when he came to the conclusion that the Dominion must be represented by their own distinctive delegations is not quite known. Nevertheless, the fact that the demand would be made must have been known if public opinion in Canada was to be considered. The cry was raised that the small nations were not to have their policies directed by their bigger brothers. Referring to Belgium, Dafoe wrote: "Every small nation should be as free to conduct its own affairs, 'political, economic and military, without condition or restriction' as every large and powerful state or confederation."¹⁷

As far as the Canadian delegates were concerned the panel system would not afford Canada adequate representation. Under this system any Dominion could appear, represented by its

15. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 18, 1918, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

16. Borden, Memoirs, II, p. 890.

17. M.F.P., Nov. 6, 1918, "Belgium's Future."

own Prime Minister, when matters of particular interest to it were being discussed. Borden was finally forced to object to this system as well on the grounds that since Canada had no special problems to bring before the Conference she would never¹⁸ have any representation under such an arrangement. He demanded in courteous but "flat-footed terms" that the Dominions should have direct representation. Lloyd George agreed to support this demand.¹⁹

Such a demand for direct representation could not be made without encountering some opposition. Surprisingly, the most serious opposition came from Canada's neighbor, the United States. Both Wilson and Lansing argued that although the Dominions demanded the same representation as the other small Powers, they would have considerably more than that in that they were also represented by Great Britain as a Great Power.²⁰ Wilson also claimed that although he did not object to Dominion representation in principle, he did object to the idea of seventeen British delegates in comparison to the five delegates which all the other Great Powers were to have.²¹ At the next meeting of the War Cabinet the Dominions would not withdraw their demand for direct representation and Lloyd George readied for a struggle. At that point Wilson changed his mind and accepted the fact. No reason for this sudden change is known, but there is the possibility that in view of Clemenceau's earlier favourable attitude towards the Dominions, based on the consideration of the large part which they played in Germany's defeat,²² Wilson merely decided

18. Dafoe, "Canada at the Peace Conference."

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, p. 49.

22. Ibid.

to bow to the inevitable.

The struggle for the principle was now won. The next step was to define the form of the representation for the Dominions. After much discussion within the British delegation, the majority were prepared to accept compromise representation of one delegate per Dominion. Borden objected strongly on the ground that Canada would in this manner have only one-half the representation of Serbia, Rumania or Belgium. Lloyd George insisted on the Canadian stand at the meeting of the five powers and secured a compromise of two representatives each for Canada, Australia, South Africa and India, while New Zealand had one and Newfoundland had no direct representation. Later Belgium and Serbia were granted another delegate each, under Dominion protest.²³ Thus the British representation at the Peace Conference was made up of fourteen delegates. Canada herself sent four delegates to the Peace Conference; Sir Robert Borden, ~~the~~ Hon. Arthur L. Sifton, Sir George Foster and ~~the~~ Hon. C.J. Doherty, to sit in on the negotiations alternatively, so that Canada was always represented by two men. In this manner the representation of the Dominions at the Peace Conference was brought into line with the fact that the draft Covenant of the League of Nations recognized the need for separate representation of the self-governing Dominions.²⁴

Yet all these gains were not to be secured against only international opposition. There was a considerable amount of hesitancy against these forward steps within Canada itself -- not to speak of the great amounts of opposition found in the

23. Ibid.

24. Article I, Covenant of the League of Nations.

Antipodean Dominions. As he looked back on the developments of those three months of advancement of Canadian status, Dafoe was moved to comment: "Canada, not withstanding [centralist opposition], was represented at the Peace Conference. She was not there as a result of any concession. Canada simply had to be at the Peace Conference. She was there by right as one of the powers that had curbed the ²⁵might of Germany."

As to the significance to Canada of her representation at Paris he claimed that she had "made good her claim to be a nation; had she been content to leave her interests solely in the hands of the British representatives she would have confessed herself ²⁶in fact and in aspiration a colony and nothing else."

ii. Canadian Participation in the Peace Negotiations.

Canada had two remarkable advantages at Paris which aided her in taking an effective part in the process of peacemaking. In the first place, had the Canadians not been a part of the British delegation their words would not have carried nearly so much weight. Also, in the light of the last observation, Canada had the advantage of access to the great fund of knowledge and experience possessed by the British Foreign Office and its staff ²⁷of experts at Paris. Secondly, Canada was fortunate, at this stage of her history, in having as her head of state a statesman of the qualities of Sir Robert Borden. Borden himself had the aid of three other very capable Canadian statesmen, the four ²⁸together forming a rather strong delegation. Because of the fact that the British Dominions were represented within the major

25. M.F.P., Nov. 28, 1920, "Breaking the Bonds of Empire."

26. Dafoe, "Canada at the Peace Conference."

27. C.A.R., 1919, pp. 70-71.

28. W.A. Riddell, World Security by Conference, (Toronto, 1947) p. 20.

Powers by the five British Empire delegates, Canada was represented by only two delegates as compared with three delegates for the other small nations.

Once the Peace Conference got under way Wilson's idea for a league of nations was brought out. As a result the negotiations began with discussions which were to lead to the formation of the League of Nations. Wilson himself believed that the building of the League was the heart of the peace settlement and therefore rushed its completion. It has been said ²⁹ that he did this for two distinct reasons. In the first place, there was the danger that the other powers would slide away from a project in which he suspected they had little belief, unless it was a part of the treaties. Secondly, he believed that if the idea of a league of nations was a part of the treaties the territorial and economic settlement would be based on broad principle instead of temporary expediency. Mr. Dafoe had a different idea of what Wilson's purpose was:

President Wilson had to go home at this critical juncture, and he had to take back with him to the United States something tangible to report; and the League of Nations was about the only thing available. The second reason was this: that if we had a League of Nations actually formed, a great many perplexing minor questions could be relegated to that body and could be dealt with by them, thus simplifying the work of the Conference. But the great reason. . . why they first. . . concentrated upon the discussion of a League of Nations was, that the great powers knew they were divided by very serious divergences of view, and so they proposed to tackle first the things upon which they were in agreement, in the hope that time would minimize their points of difference and make subsequent entire agreement possible./30

Regardless of what the reasons were, the Conference was

29. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, p. 57.

30. J.W. Dafoe, "Address to the Canadian Club of Winnipeg," Apr. 8, 1919.

to begin with what would prove to be the greatest experiment ever attempted in post-war international co-operation. The idea was not altogether President Wilson's; it had been considered by statesmen in various parts of the world during the war years, and in fact had been the intention of many world statesmen at least since the days of the Vienna Congress. It has been authoritatively claimed that Sir Edward Grey (later Viscount Grey of Fallodon), and not President Wilson, was the progenitor of the League.³¹ This earliest proposal was made in 1914 on the eve of the War. Later, more detailed proposals were submitted by British, American, and French sources. These sources were both private and public. Amongst the private sources of the idea were the American League to Enforce Peace founded by ex-President W.H. Taft and some other eminent individuals in June, 1915, in the United States, and the British League of Nations Society and the Fabian Society in Great Britain.³² However the first governmental step in that direction was made in the United Kingdom where a committee on the League of Nations was appointed by the Foreign Secretary under the chairmanship of Lord Phillimore. An interim report of this committee was made in March, 1918, and its final report submitted in June of that year.³³ Draft proposals were also submitted by President Wilson, a French Ministerial Committee, General Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil.³⁴ Although there was no formal original contribution made by any Canadian, Col. Biggar submitted a series of memoranda

31. C.A.R., 1918, p. 108.

32. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, p. 58.

33. A.E. Zimmern, The League of Nations and the Rule of Law, (London, 1936) pp. 179-185.

34. C.A.R., 1918, pp. 109-111.

35

analysing the various proposals.

Early in 1918 the Free Press carried an editorial which recognized these trends towards "a new international order after the war." Under the old order "Imperialistic aims" could be justified "by reference to the needs of national defence."

The existence of a league of nations now appears, not merely as a necessary safeguard, but as the only effective safeguard against a return to the old order, with all its lurking dangers. People are therefore no longer asking, Can such a league be organized? -- but rather, What shall the organization be?/36

Dafoe himself answered his question in a later issue of the paper. His idea of the League was that of a strong organization possessing the power to act if and when necessary. And those setting up the organization should be ready "not merely to abide by [its constitution] themselves, but to help to enforce it against any nation that dares to break it."³⁷ These stern measures he found necessary in order to prevent a resurgence of German aggression which might easily flare up as a result of instability which must result in the Balkans from "the addition of a number of independent states, hostile to each other by tradition and stirred by century-old hatreds. . . . Nothing but a league of democratic nations can insure the permanence of any such arrangement unless German politicians of the militarist type are put strictly out of business."³⁸ But when Dafoe encountered the proposals for a system of world federation rather than the proposed League of Nations, he opposed it as vigorously as he supported the League. In world federation he saw a danger

35. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, p. 58.

36. M.F.P., Feb. 25, 1918, "A League of Nations."

37. M.F.P., Aug. 3, 1918, "Remembrance Day;" quotation from a statement made by Lloyd George, Dec. 14, 1917.

38. Free Press Evening Bulletin, Oct. 22, 1918, "An Old Spectre."

to the new autonomy which Canada was in the process of securing.

What these idealists really hanker after is a super-national body -- some sort of parliament of man based upon representation by population. This is the idlest of dreams in present state of world political evolution. The Covenant of the League of Nations represents a long advance upon the older conceptions of the inviolability of the rights of sovereignty enjoyed by a nation; but any large surrender to an international body of autonomous power is still a long way in the future./39

Notwithstanding these minor difficulties, discussions on a league of nations began about a month after the armistice and Borden was determined that Canada should have a voice in its formation. He insisted on Canadian representation in the British Empire committee which was to formulate and put forward the views of the Empire on the establishment of a league of nations.⁴⁰ It was through this committee that Sir Robert secured charter membership in the League for the Dominions. This League membership appeared to Sir Robert to take the form of an international recognition of the advance in status that had been granted the Dominions at the Imperial Conference of 1917.⁴¹

Although Canadian representatives participated in all the discussions towards the formation of the League of Nations, there was little that was contributed by them to the original draft. The model for the draft Covenant was found in a short article by General Smuts and the main Canadian contribution took the form of a memorandum by Sir Robert Borden commenting on the draft Covenant. This memorandum was submitted to the members of the British Empire

39. J.W. Dafoe, "Peacemaking at Paris," M.F.P., Apr. 15, 1919.

40. Borden, Memoirs, II, p. 87.

41. F.H. Soward, "Factors in Canadian Foreign Policy," Canada in World Affairs: The Pre-War Years, (Toronto, 1941) p. 17.

delegation on March 13, 1919, and was in the form of a critical survey of the Covenant. Criticisms included, amongst others, such as would continue to safeguard the newly found independence of the Dominions. Article VII of the draft Covenant was criticized for giving the League control over the "naval and military forces and armaments" of any state admitted to the League. In this memorandum the long-term Canadian views on Article X were also stated.

It is submitted that this article should be struck out or materially amended. It involves an undertaking by the High Contracting Parties to preserve the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all States members of the League. The Signatories to the Covenant are called upon to declare (a) that all existing territorial delimitations are just and expedient, (b) that they will continue indefinitely to be just and expedient, (c) that the Signatories will be responsible therefore. . . . There may be national aspirations to which the provisions of the peace treaty will not do justice and which cannot be permanently repressed. Subsequent articles contemplate the possibility of war between two or more of the Signatories under such conditions that the other Signatories are not called upon to participate actively therein. If, as a result of such war, the nation attacked occupies and proposes to annex (possibly with the consent of a majority of the population) a portion of the territory of the aggressor, what is to be the operation of this Article? Indeed the Article seems inconsistent with the provisions of articles XII to XVII inclusive. Obviously a dispute as to territory is within the meaning and competence of the six Articles last referred to, under which a disposition of the dispute materially different from that proposed by Article X might be reached.

The memorandum concluded with two assumptions both specially noted in his copy by Dafoe, and the only ones so noted in the document. "It is assumed that the adhesion of each Signatory State to the Covenant will be subject to the approval of its Parliament.

"It is also assumed that the Dominions of the British Empire are entitled to become Signatories to the Covenant."

This question of Canadian status within the League of Nations was soon resolved. The Dominions were all granted formal membership within the organization. Dafoe felt that there actually was never any question about the right to membership. When it was agreed that India, although not a self-governing nation, was entitled to membership in the Peace Conference in virtue of her contribution to the war effort, was also entitled to membership in the League, Dafoe claimed that "the Peace Conference [was], in fact, the first meeting of the League of Nations. Membership in one body implies membership in the other."⁴² The representation agreed upon for the Dominions at the League of Nations was that each Dominion could send three delegates to the Assembly if it desired to, but could cast only one vote. When some elements in the United States criticized this plan, it was because, Dafoe said, they failed "to recognize the fact that representation in the house of assembly rests not upon numbers, but upon nationality."⁴³

At this stage of the negotiations it was understood that there would be only one British Empire representative on the Council of the League. This fact was accepted by Dafoe. Canada, he believed, would be adequately represented on the Council by this one delegate. "Presumably the British representatives on the executive council of the League of Nations will be drawn from a panel made up of all the British Premiers. In practice the Prime Minister of Great Britain will usually serve, but he

42. Dafoe, "Peacemaking," M.F.P., Apr. 29, 1919.

43. Ibid.

will be instructed in the course he is to follow by the panel of which he is a member."⁴⁴ Thus his acceptance still did not imply any lowering of the equality of status of all the British nations. What it did imply was a diplomatic unity of all self-governing parts of the Empire in their dealings with the Council of the League.

In fact his attitude at this time was wrong by a matter of only one day. Originally, as indicated in Lord Robert Cecil's drafts of the Covenant, no small power was to be represented on the Council, unless specially summoned at some time when the Council dealt with matters concerning it. Because of the objections of the small Powers to this plan the revised Covenant granted four non-permanent seats on the Council for the lesser "states". This act brought a new problem to the fore. Since Canada was not technically a "state", she would not be eligible. The problem was brought to the attention of Sir Robert Borden by Arthur L. Sifton and the Covenant was amended so that the word "states" was altered to "members of the League". The Dominions⁴⁵ were now eligible for election to the Council. Still, Borden was not satisfied. He felt that Dominion eligibility was "arguable",⁴⁶ and continued the fight to secure the right of the Dominions to be elected to the non-permanent seats on the Council. In a memorandum to Lloyd George he wrote: "Canada is asked to make way [to lesser nations] except when effort and sacrifice are demanded; then, but not till then, she is accorded full and even prior representation. She is to be in the first line of the battle but not even in the back seat of the

44. Ibid.

45. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, pp. 63-4.

46. Borden, Memoirs, May 2, 1919, Borden to Lloyd George, II, p. 947.

Council."⁴⁷ On the same day the matter was cleared up with a memorandum sent to Sir Robert, which guaranteed the Dominions eligibility and was signed by Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and President Wilson.⁴⁸ Yet, notwithstanding this achievement, Dafoe felt that Canadian right to membership in the Council was "purely theoretic", and that Canada would never send a representative there unless she did so temporarily while her interests were under discussion.⁴⁹ He did not believe that the other members of the Assembly would ever elect Canada and in that manner place two British Empire delegates on the governing body of the League. The logic to his argument was later borne out in that no British Dominion was elected to the Council until the composition of that body was altered during the Seventh Assembly.

There was only one other large issue in which Canada participated during the organization of the League, and in that she did not play a principal part, although that role was taken by another British Dominion. This was the question of racial equality amongst States members of the League.

The matter was originally brought up by the Japanese delegation. They requested that the Covenant should endorse the principle of racial equality by appending such a clause to an early article on religious equality. This proposal at first attained a not inconsiderable amount of support from many of the European delegates, including the British, who were not as worried over racial issues as they were over national issues. Premier Hughes, however, saw in this proposal a danger to the policy of a "white Australia" and immediately seized on the

47. *Ibid*, May 6, 1919, Borden to Lloyd George, II, p. 954.

48. *Ibid*, II, p. 961.

49. *M.F.P.*, Sept. 25, 1919, "Canada and the League Council."

possibility that such a statement included in any written constitution of the League would give that body the power to interfere in the domestic affairs of any nation, particularly through their immigration policies.⁵⁰ Other dangers of such a policy would include bringing before the League the fiscal and tariff policies of a nation, and a potential aggressor might use such arguments as a justification for attacking another nation. Although Borden tried to effect some sort of a compromise on this problem, Hughes was adamant and threatened to start up a campaign against the Japanese proposal in the United States and in the British Dominions. It was at this point that the more favourably disposed nations deserted Japan, not wishing to stir up unnecessary trouble.⁵¹ Although Dafoe did not discuss this problem at that time, it did not escape his view and he covered it quite thoroughly in later years.⁵²

Because of the many problems encountered in its drafting the Covenant of the League of Nations could not be all things to all men. It contained many loopholes which were direct results of the attempts to affect some sort of a compromise between the aspirations of the various delegations. To Canada, and the other Dominions and India as well, the importance of the Covenant was that it secured for them an international recognition of their newly acquired status. In the League she was not subjected to any inferiority "and by vigorous pressure or ingenious editing had evaded classification as a sovereign state or a colony."⁵³

50. Carter, British Commonwealth and Security, p. 7.

51. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, p. 71.

52. See below,

53. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, p. 81.

Dafoe saw the League as an instrument which would establish a new order in international affairs. This was made possible mainly by its repudiation of the old system of secret treaties and with this factor in its make-up the League was "a great step forward along the road to a stable world."⁵⁴ He foresaw a long life for the organization, given some degree of co-operation by the member States; and it was towards this ideal that he was to fight during the life of the League. Nor was he blind to its imperfections. The Covenant fell "far short" of the "well developed" international view⁵⁵ points of the labor leaders of Britain and France. Another drawback to its proper functioning was the liberum veto held by the members of the Council.⁵⁶ He also felt that the amendments to the Covenant which were made as concessions to national sensibilities would have the effect of creating rival sets of critics who would be even more discontented with the amended document than they were with the original draft.⁵⁷ These same concessions would hurt the League in that they modified its proposed structure so "that instead of being a super-state with actual powers, it became nothing but a concert of nations, bound together by moral obligations and with its power of action limited. . . ."⁵⁸ Another danger existed in the fact that the League, as it stood at the time, was little more than "a league of the victorious allied nations under a camouflage."⁵⁹ This observation, however, could

54. Dafoe, "Peacemaking," M.F.P., Apr. 26, 1919.

55. Ibid., M.F.P., Apr. 30, 1919.

56. Ibid., M.F.P., Apr. 15, 1919.

57. Ibid.

58. M.F.P., Sept. 22, 1919, "Justifying European Distrust."

59. Dafoe, "Peacemaking," M.F.P., May 16, 1919.

be justified only if the former enemy powers were kept permanently out of the League, and the Covenant did make provision for their later entry. Another danger which was corrected in the revised Covenant was that of Great Power control of the Council. This no longer existed when the Assembly had the right to elect four lesser Powers to non-permanent seats on the Council.⁶⁰

He believed the League to be a truly worth while experiment to Europe as well as to Canada. Pre-war Europe he saw as a politically "barbarous country" which would not "really want democracy" for a long time. But he hoped "that a league of nations, with a high sense of its duties to the world, putting aside national ambitions, and acting in a wise and just way without injudicious interference, may conceivably, in forty or fifty years bring about some degree of order and democratic feeling in Europe."⁶¹ Another merit of the League to Canada, as well as to any other "young nation which [did] not want to embark upon elaborate programmes of military preparedness" was that she was, "by virtue of her membership in the League, . . . entitled to believe, and to act upon the belief, that no international question directly affecting her interests [could] arise which [would] not be adjustable by peaceable means by the machinery set up under the Covenant."⁶² For the world generally the League gave the promise of a new mental outlook on international affairs.

After [the] acceptance by the great majority of the organized countries of the world of the principles of periodical conferences for the

60. Ibid., see above, p.28.

61. Dafoe, "Address to the Canadian Club of Winnipeg," Apr. 8, 1919.

62. Dafoe, "Peacemaking," M.F.P., May 7, 1919.

consideration of common interests, of arbitration before proceeding to war, of publicity about international differences, and of open diplomacy the world can never return, even in the inevitable period of reaction, to the pre-war conceptions of international relations./63

The Canadian part in the actual processes of peace-making, as were also the parts taken by the other small nations, was necessarily small. The small nations were considered as Powers with "particular" interests and as such could participate only when those matters were under discussion. The only Powers with general interests were the Great Powers; France, Italy, Japan, the United States, and the British Empire, and as such these Powers played the main role in the making of the peace. Canada, however, could participate indirectly in "general" negotiations because of her position as part of the British Empire delegation.

Sir Robert Borden, combining with his abilities the fact that he was the Prime Minister of the senior British Dominion, was regarded as a senior delegate at the Conference, occupying as important a position as did any other British delegate with the exception of Lloyd George himself. "Few men outside the Big Four really accomplished more."⁶⁴ At intervals he replaced Lloyd George on the Council of Ten, and thus was chairman of that body, as well as the British Empire Delegation and the Council of Five,⁶⁵ on different occasions. For this reason it is difficult to assess the true contribution of Canada to the Peace Conference as much of the better work of her representatives

63. M.F.P., Apr. 29, 1919, "The League a Fact."

64. Riddell, World Security, p. 20.

65. C.A.R., 1919, p. 77; see also R.L. Borden, Canada in the Commonwealth: From Conflict to Co-operation, (Oxford, 1929) p. 101.

was done in their capacity of British Empire delegates and in consequence the details of the Canadian accomplishments have been lost.

Notwithstanding these advantages, Canada, as a small power, could do little on her own. From the beginning it became obvious that the main decisions would be made by the Supreme Council. When the small Powers, Canada included, objected, Clemenceau informed the Conference that because of the costs incurred by the Great Powers in the war they had the right to control the Conference, and that the small Powers were only there through the courtesy of the Great Powers and thus they should not object to being relegated to a minor role.⁶⁶

Since Canada had no territorial ambitions to realize, the issues of the Conference in which she was primarily interested were the Covenant of the League of Nations, Article X of the Covenant, and the constitution of the International Labour Organization. The first of these has already been covered;⁶⁷ the second will be dealt with in a following chapter.

These, however, were not the only Canadian interests in the Peace Conference. Canada showed a general interest in most of the important problems considered. Although the British Empire delegation as a whole favoured a stern treaty, the Canadian delegation dissented and Borden wrote in early December, 1918, that he "would not stand for it."⁶⁸ Neither did he

66. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, pp. 52-6.

67. Because Dafoe took little interest in the organization of the International Labour Organization, and because the Canadian part in the organization of that body took so similar a course to the part taken by Canada in the organization of the League of Nations, it has been intentionally omitted from this study.

68. Borden, Memoirs, II, p. 874.

concur in the opinion that Germany could pay the amount of the repara-⁶⁹tions demanded of her. Although Dafoe, for his part, suggested no detailed plan for a peace settlement, it was obvious that he would have preferred a stern treaty, but not so harsh a treaty as that sought by France. Reviewing the nature of the Treaty imposed by the Central Powers on Roumania, in the light of their request for a "just" peace, he wrote: "This nation that knows no justice when it offers terms to a smaller opponent wants us now to meet her on terms that will allow her to quit the struggle with honor to herself. It could mean nothing but dishonor to the rest of the world."⁷⁰ Later, he felt that the peace which would be arrived at would be severe, but not of the degree of severity as was wanted by the French -- "a peace which [would] inflict upon Germany a punishment that [would] be absolutely conclusive to the people of that country that a war such as they went into in 1914, apart altogether from ethical considerations, [was] a bad business proposition."⁷¹

Another item of interest to Canada, though of little practical consequence, was a suggested increase to her territory. Two alternatives were broached. The first was a plan whereby the British West Indies would enter Confederation, but this was objected to by both the West Indians and Borden who⁷² gave as their reason that the United States might not approve. The second plan was that of an exchange of some British Caribbean territory for the Alaska Panhandle, which would be given to Canada. But, although the origin of this plan was American

69. Ibid., p. 886; see also Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, p. 37.

70. Free Press Evening Bulletin, Oct. 17, 1918, "Just as an Example."

71. Dafoe, "Address to the Canadian Club of Winnipeg," Apr. 8, 1919.

72. Borden, Memoirs, II, p. 844; see also C.A.R., 1919, p. 269.

and was of more interest to Canada than the first, nothing
more was heard of it after the original suggestion.⁷³

iii. Signature and Ratification of the Treaties.

The treaties having been completed the next problem was securing their signature and ratification by the several Contracting Parties. The case of the British Empire was a singular one. Would the delegates from Great Britain sign the treaties for the Empire as a whole, or would the various Dominion delegations sign for their separate Dominions? Soon after having secured for the Dominions the right of separate representation at the Conference Borden approached Lloyd George with the suggestion that the Dominions should also sign the Treaty separately. The British Prime Minister agreed and the proposal was also accepted by the Conference at a later date. But when the Treaty was signed, for some unknown reason, the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain signed for "the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas." The Dominions signed under the British signatures. This binding of the Dominions by Britain actually deprived them of the distinction of being full signatory Powers. As a result of this act the Ottawa Citizen was later able to make the claim that Canada "was not a party to the treaty," but again simply a part of the British Empire and having a separate classification as a member of the League.⁷⁴

These claims were made by the Citizen in support of the Liberal Party attitude towards the ratification of the treaty. The views of the Canadian Parliamentary Liberals, the official

73. Glazebrook, Canada at Paris, p. 93.

74. Ottawa Morning Citizen, Sept. 8, 1919.

opposition to the Union Government, was that there was no need for Canada to ratify separately the instruments arrived at in Paris, as Canada was completely bound by the British ratification. Before the argument came out into the open Dafoe was already insisting on the opposite point of view. At the end of August he demanded that in the coming session of Parliament, which was called for the purpose of ratification of the Treaty, all the necessary documents be brought down, and seriously considered by Parliament. The nation must be familiarized with the problem at hand, and, "the regularization of our status will be a duty if not of this Parliament then of one of the not too distant future."⁷⁵ Later, while the discussion was attaining heated proportions in Parliament he claimed that if the Canadian people were too "timid" to assert their new status, then they could

revert to the condition of tutelage and subordination and agree that it shall be permanent. In that case we will request Great Britain to assume our external obligations and instruct us in our duties. Great Britain will then decide all questions of war and peace for us; and we shall have no responsibility beyond doing what we are told, and relying for our protection upon the arms of Britain. What a fine, self-reliant, self-respecting people we should be under such conditions!/⁷⁶

After that followed a stinging castigation of the "party which calls itself Liberal." He referred to Fielding's remarks of September the 11th as "a doctrine of inmitigable colonialism, of stereotyped and continuing inferiority" and compared it with the "most thorough-going, backward-looking Tory [remarks] of a generation ago."⁷⁷ Fielding believed that Canada had no right

75. M.F.P., Aug. 30, 1919, "Canada and the Peace Treaty."

76. M.F.P., Sept. 10, 1919, "Fearful of Our Destiny."

77. M.F.P., Sept. 13, 1919, "Colonials by Their Own Choice."

to take part in affairs of which she knew nothing. Dafoe retorted:

These affairs of which we knew nothing and about which we had no right to express an opinion was the making of a peace marking the end of a war in which Canada had taken part to the extent of a billion and one-half dollars and five hundred thousand fighting men with a casualty list in killed of sixty thousand men! . . . the true solution is to hold fast by our international status and to demand that it be justified by a corresponding change in our status in the British Commonwealth./⁷⁸

The Parliamentary ratification the Free Press advocated⁷⁹ was carried out on September 23, 1919. Shortly after this success the British Dominions again were faced with a denial of their international status by the United States, lately recognized as among the most powerful of the nations of the world. The United States had rejected the Treaty, and with it the League of Nations. One of its main reasons for the rejection was the fact that the representation of the British Empire in the League of Nations was out of proportion; that the British Empire did not merit the occupation of six seats in that organization. This blow to Canadian pride could not be left unanswered. The Free Press stated that Canada claimed membership in the Peace Conference as a matter of right and as a recognition of her equality with all other participating nations. "That equality, thus hardly won, Canada does not propose to lose to help one political party in the United States play its game for office. Canada will be equal in status to the other members of the League or she will not be a member."⁸⁰ When the final rejection of the Treaty by the Senate was certain, Dafoe had an opportunity to think over

78. Ibid.

79. C.A.R., 1919, p. 109.

80. Quoted in Round Table, X, p. 150.

the entire catastrophe and came to the conclusion that this might not have happened had Wilson taken a bipartisan delegation with him to Paris. "I don't think Wilson got much support from his United States associates unless perhaps from House. . . . It was a tragedy that Wilson did not take Taft,⁸¹ Hughes, or Root with him." From his own knowledge he was certain that public opinion in the United States was not in agreement with the decision of the Senate, but rather that the "great mass of the American people [were] in favor of the League of Nations."⁸²

iv. Significance to Canada of Her Participation in the Peacemaking.

Canadian participation in the negotiations at Paris had a considerable effect on Canadian development, both within the Empire and in the field of international relations. In her dealings with foreign nations Canada now found that because of her membership in the League she had incurred many more responsibilities than she had at any time prior to 1914. Canadian external political activity was no longer confined to the limits of the British Empire. Canada was now a member of a world partnership with headquarters at Geneva rather than at London. Canadian problems were now to become world problems, and what was more important, world problems were now to become Canadian problems. The people could no longer reside in glorious isolation with a Pax Britannica and Monroe Doctrine to protect them.

81. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 22, 1919, Dafoe to Dr. Holgate (of Evanston, Ill.) a significant observation in the light of Robert Lansing's later revelations on the internal difficulties within the American delegation at Paris; see Robert Lansing, The Peace Negotiations; a Personal Narrative, (Boston, 1921) passim.

82. Free Press Evening Bulletin, Apr. 7, 1919, "Masses Favor the League."

This sudden change in conditions indicated the need of educating the people so as to prepare them better for what might result. Shortly after his return from the Peace Conference Dafoe warned;

For this generation there can be no abiding peace. The whole world is in travail, and must jointly bear its burden. This means that we in Canada must bear our share of that burden.

Perhaps there are people who think we can retire behind our western ramparts and be indifferent to the pains of the world. . . But we can never live a cloistered national life again. There are sixty thousand graves in France and Flanders, every one of which tells us that, for good or for ill, we are in the world and must bear our part in the solution of its troubles./83

He had great hopes that we were in the world for good rather than for ill. There remained a good chance for peace; providing the League of Nations was kept intact. It was on the stability of the League that the peace of the world rested. Because of that he felt that if the League did impose some limitation on national sovereignty it was worth while and no State could object to it. If they did object they had no business in the League and should get out of the organization. "The League would then lapse; the vision of an international organization to keep peace would fade; and we should be back where we were before the war, facing the practical certainty that, given the necessary time for recuperation and for international differences to become acute, there will be another great war."/84 Thus he avoided criticisms of the League as a super-state. For truly, while the world was not yet accustomed to the infant organization he believed that no nation

83. Dafoe, "Address to the Canadian Club of Winnipeg."

84. M.F.P., Sept. 11, 1919, "The League and Parliament."

should hinder its growth, even at the cost of some of its own international prestige. Nor did he believe that loyalty to the League would endanger individual "passionate devotion to one's own country." He believed that such a dual loyalty was not only desirable, but also a necessary thing in the world of that day. "Internationalism is a contradiction in terms unless it pre-supposes loyal nationalism, and the League of Nations totters to a fall unless builded upon the pillars of self respecting nationhood."⁸⁵

Therefore, by her unreserved membership with the new international organization Canada had accepted certain obligations. Along with these obligations she made some large and important national gains. By signing the Treaty of Versailles Canada had established her national status. As a member of the League of Nations she was "on an equality with the other nations of the world."⁸⁶ Not only was this equality of status established, but Canada had made good her claim of being a nation within the larger family of nations, and at the same time had her identity as a member of the British Alliance recognized by the nations of the world.⁸⁷

With this new situation apparent, Dafoe began to call for a clarification of the new Dominion status by the British Parliament. As matters stood at the time, he found the situation to be more anomalous than ever, which "reinforced power-fully the necessity for a new definition of our status."⁸⁸ With Canada assuming the full status of a nation, her technical

85. M.F.P., Jul. 2, 1919, "Nationhood."

86. M.F.P., Jul. 29, 1920, "The Imperial Press Conference."

87. Dafoe, "Canada at the Peace Conference."

88. Dafoe Papers, Aug. 26, 1919, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.



dependency upon Great Britain must terminate.⁸⁹ Participation in the Peace Conference and membership in the League had⁹⁰ "finally destroyed the old conception of the Empire."⁹¹ This fact, he felt, was what worried the "diehard imperialists" most. They were worried that more autonomy would tend to disruption of the Empire. He felt that this view was "silly." Instead of being disrupted, the bands of the Empire would be strengthened⁹¹ with the greater freedom secured by its various parts.

From that time on Dafoe and the Free Press were to campaign for a declaration of equality of status by the British Parliament, both internally and externally, for all the self-governing parts of the Empire. That campaign would be carried on continuously until the final goal was attained, and at no time did Dafoe's zeal for the cause flag or his pen falter.

89. Ibid.

90. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 9, 1926, Dafoe to O.D. Skelton.

91. M.F.P., Dec. 28, 1920, "Breaking the Bonds of Empire."

CHAPTER III

ASSERTIONS OF COMPLETE AUTONOMY

It has been stated that the Paris Peace Conference might be taken as a transitional stage between the periods of Imperial centralization and Dominion independence.¹ This statement, however, is only partially true. Although Canada sought her independence at that time and made considerable gains towards that end, the goal itself was not reached until sometime later. Thus, the period from 1920-22 has been more accurately referred to by another authority as a "period of tentative centralization."² Certain elements in both Canada and Great Britain, not to speak of foreign countries, could neither understand the basic changes which had taken place in the make-up of the British Empire nor were they willing to make an effort to understand them. For that reason some time was to pass before the fact of Dominion independence became an accepted factor in the conduct of both British Imperial and general world foreign relations. The period immediately after the Peace Settlement was one of crucial importance to the concept of Dominion independence, for it was during this period that the gains made at Paris could be either solidified or lost. Several events were to take place during this space of time which were to lead towards solidification of the advances made at Versailles.

1. Defensive Attitude Against the United States' Anti-Dominions Policy

The first blow to the new status of the British Dominions came with the Lenroot Reservation to the Treaty of Versailles,

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1. H.G. Skilling, Canadian Representation Abroad, (Toronto, 1945) p. 149.
 2. Dawson, Dominion Status, p. 4.

which was brought up before the United States Senate. Up to this point it had seemed that the United States would definitely reject the Treaty and the League. In an effort to save the situation from a return of that country to international isolation, Senator Lenroot proposed a reservation to the Treaty which would have had the effect of withdrawing from the British Dominions their right to separate membership within the League of Nations. The reply of the Free Press was that if the United States entered the League under those conditions the League would have "little further interest for Canada." Canada would hold on to her nationality and her sovereign power "outside the League of Nations."³ This was a strong attitude to take and it carried with it dangers to the League at least as great as those of American non-participation. If Canada stayed out of the League for that reason, it was apparent that there was a very strong likelihood that the other British Dominions would follow suit; and Britain herself, in order to preserve the much vaunted diplomatic unity of the Empire would also be forced to drop out of the international organization.⁴ The dangers of having the British Empire outside of the League would be at least as great as those of the absence of the United States. The Lenroot Reservation therefore could find little support in foreign capitals.

Nor did it find much support in the United States. Quoting an editorial from the Philadelphia Public Ledger, a strong Republican newspaper, the Free Press made this point.⁵

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3. M.F.P., Feb. 16, 1920, "The Lenroot Reservation."
 4. M.F.P., Sept. 19, 1919, "Aimed at Canada."
 5. Free Press Evening Bulletin, Sept. 30, 1919, "The Dominions and the League of Nations."

The editorial stressed that British membership in the League of Nations was not the result of a plot by Great Britain to gain more power in the League, but rather that Britain had no desire for the Dominions to have distinctive membership in the League. It was logical that the foreign policies of the British Dominions would be closer to the foreign policy of the United States than to that of Great Britain. Britain favoured an open door policy in oriental immigration; the Dominions, with the United States, did not.

Australia and Canada are practically certain to have the same Pacific Ocean as we have, and, we may be very glad of their votes at some critical meeting of the Assembly.

It is a ridiculous misapprehension of the situation to imagine that these 'six British votes' are the result of a sinister British plot against America. They are the result of five new and limited 'declarations of independence.'/6

Dafoe was in wholehearted agreement with this stand and later wrote that "the enfranchisement of these young democracies is bound to supply potential allies in the Parliament of the World for the United States."⁷

At the same time he did not want to see the United States out of the League. He sincerely believed that they should ratify the Treaty and showed that a very great majority of the American people were in favour of such a step but were having their wish⁸ denied by their representatives in the Senate. If the Treaty were ratified in its existing form it would indicate no discrimination in the League in favour of Great Britain and against the United States. If the American reservation were accepted it

6. Ibid.

7. M.F.P., Feb. 5, 1920, "The Fight for National Status."

8. M.F.P., Dec. 1, 1919, "Influences for Ratification."

would amount to rank discrimination against the British Dominions. "The practical effect would be to throw Canada, Australia, South Africa, and India out of the League of Nations while retaining Haiti, Cuba, Honduras, Guatemala and all the rest of the little hybrid American republics, who will be there, practically as understudies of the United States."⁹ Nevertheless, he foresaw that the Republican view in the Senate would prevail and that the matter would be left to the election of 1920 for decision.¹⁰ That decision would be of great importance, for, if the League was to continue to function properly the United States would eventually have to take her place there¹¹ for the "whole plan of carrying out the peace. . . relied upon the United States serving as a buffer between France and Great Britain and as final adjudicator in their disputes which were early in evidence in Paris."¹²

In the meantime, he felt, while the dispute raged in the United States, Canada must benefit in the eyes of the world. The rejection of the League by the American Senate had placed this country in a position where she stood her ground in defence of her rights against the most powerful nation in the world, without giving way. Canadian statesmen could now claim for her "the moral leadership of the North American continent."¹³

ii. The Question of a Canadian Minister to Washington

While the question continued about American participation in the League of Nations, Canada forged ahead in a path

9. M.F.P., Sept. 19, 1919, "Aimed at Canada."

10. Ibid.

11. M.F.P., Aug. 11, 1920, "No Time for Wobbling."

12. M.F.P., Jul. 29, 1921, "The United States as Umpire to Europe."

13. M.F.P., Dec. 23, 1919, "Canada's Moral Leadership."

which aimed at consolidation of some of her gains at the Peace Conference. This time her progress was made within the confines of the British Empire. At Paris Canadian statesmen had participated in one of the most interesting forms of diplomatic activity possible; the negotiation of a peace treaty closing a major war. They had seen that it was quite possible for Canada and Great Britain to follow diverging policies in international relations. With the precedent behind them of having once ventured in diplomacy as Canadians, Borden felt that it was time Canada secured the right to look after her own foreign affairs, at least in as much as the United States was concerned.

The situation with respect to Canadian-American relations was a singular one. Canada had no diplomatic representation in Washington whatsoever, outside of the British Embassy, and all Canadian-American business was handled there. This comprised at least three-quarters of the affairs of that Embassy.¹⁴ For many years Canadians felt that their interests suffered because often, the British diplomatic officials were poorly informed about Canada. Eminent public men during both the Macdonald and Laurier eras had recognized the need for Canadian representation in foreign capitals, but, in those days, only¹⁵ commercial representation was sought.

There were other precedents for Canadian diplomatic representation at Washington besides the Canadian participation at Paris. The International Joint Commission had been performing

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14. Skilling, Representation Abroad, p. 184, see also A. Gordon Dewey, The Dominions and Diplomacy; The Canadian Contribution, II, (London, 1929) pp. 101-2.
15. Round Table, II, p. 153; see also John S. Galbraith, The Establishment of Canadian Diplomatic Status at Washington, (Berkeley, 1951) passim.

some diplomatic functions since 1909.¹⁶ A Canadian War Mission was established in Washington in 1918,¹⁷ as a liaison agency between the Canadian War Trade Board at Ottawa and the British War Mission in Washington. Representing the Canadian Government instead of the Crown this group performed some diplomatic functions¹⁸ and was found to be a highly efficient and useful organism for both Canada and the United States, in that it eliminated the need for much of the triangular communications between Ottawa and Washington, which normally passed through London. After the War the Mission was temporarily continued until 1921 under the direction of its wartime secretary, Merchant Mahoney, who, after 1921, remained in Washington as a commercial reporter, without diplomatic status, for the Department of External Affairs.¹⁹

Considering the proven value of direct Canadian contact with Washington, Borden wrote to Lord Milner, the Colonial Secretary, on October 3, 1918, stating the need for separate Canadian diplomatic representation at Washington,²⁰ and discussed the matter further in London and Paris during the next few months.²¹ The British Government was agreeable and, in time, worked out a method whereby Canada could be represented in such a way so as not to damage the principle of diplomatic unity of the Empire. The solution, announced in both the British and Canadian Parliaments on May 10, 1920,²² was that Canada

16. Dawson, Dominion Status, passim.

17. C.A.R., 1919, p. 115.

18. Skilling, Representation Abroad, p. 199.

19. Ibid., p. 201.

20. A.J. Toynbee, The Conduct of British Empire Foreign Relations Since the Peace Settlement, (London, 1928) p. 65.

21. Borden, Memoirs, II, p. 1002.

22. Ibid.

should appoint a staff and a Minister plenipotentiary who would be part of the British Embassy and next in rank to the Ambassador. He would have complete charge of Canadian affairs and be accredited to the United States Government for that purpose. During the absence of the Ambassador he was to take charge of the entire Embassy.

Although the Free Press had long been demanding Canadian representation at Washington this plan was not quite what Dafoe had wanted. He realized the need for the Canadian War Mission and yet objected to its lack of diplomatic status. "He would not be regarded as a member of the diplomatic corps to which every minister, however insignificant the power he represents, belongs."²³ Yet, even appointing a representative to the British Embassy, with full diplomatic status, was also unsatisfactory, for he would occupy an inferior position to most other diplomatic representatives at Washington.

Canada cannot afford to have at Washington any representative until he is assured a status which will invest him with authority and entitle him to respect.

Canada can lay claim to being the greatest power in the new world, after the United States and Brazil; and her representative at Washington certainly cannot take a position inferior in rank and dignity to the ministers from every little Central American or South American republic.

Yet this would be the plight in which a Canadian would find himself at present at Washington. . . . if he were appointed a secretary or attaché to the British Embassy, he would have the status to which he was appointed and no other./²⁴

As Dafoe had written this before the negotiations between Borden and Milner had begun, there can be no doubt as to

23. M.F.P., Sept. 8, 1919, "Our Representative at Washington."

24. Ibid.

what he thought of the completed arrangements. Although they afforded Canada diplomatic recognition in the United States, this was to be recognition of a status below that of Great Britain, and thus below that of any other sovereign state. Under the Milner plan the Canadian Minister to Washington was necessarily junior in rank to the British Ambassador.

Once the compromise between Canadian wishes and those of Great Britain was effected in the Milner proposals, however, Dafoe accepted the situation for a short while and demanded the immediate appointment of such a Canadian Minister to look after Canadian affairs. Referring to a Washington despatch which suggested that the project had been shelved, possibly through the influence of the British Government, he deprecated the secrecy about the matter and called for the Government to act. "There is a want of knowledge about the whole proceedings and a feeling has been aroused that moves are being made behind a curtain that would not well stand the scrutiny of open inspection. This has now been accentuated by the Washington despatch."²⁵ As the Government remained non-committal and continued to delay, his tone became stronger. He again began to demand full sovereign Canadian status at Washington, rather than status as part of the British Embassy. "It is to be assumed that if Canada sends a minister he will go as the representative of Canada, one of the British nations, and not of Canada, a subordinate Dominion."²⁶ This sentiment began to increase as hints of news and higher American tariff schedules began to seep across the border. Canada needed diplomatic representation at Washington

25. M.F.P., Oct. 1, 1920, "Canada's Ambassador at Washington."

26. M.F.P., Oct. 22, 1920, "Australia, Canada and Washington."

to assist in the effort to forestall these dangers to her trade. The blame for delay, he felt, must lie with the Canadian Imperialistic authorities.

I confess myself disturbed at the outcome of this policy by which Canada is asked systematically to forfeit her interests and her dignity to a sentiment for something which has really disappeared, that is, the diplomatic predominance of the Mother Country. When the Empire means sacrifices both as regards our material interests and our national dignity it is time to begin to look out for squalls. I know, of course, that the difficulty is more with Canadian than with the British authorities but I do not know that this mitigates the dangers of the situation./27

Similar statements continued to appear in the editorial pages of the Free Press from time to time during the next six years until finally the appointment of Mr. Vincent Massey as the first Canadian Minister plenipotentiary to Washington was made. It would thus appear that Dafoe was most unsuccessful in his campaign for an appointment to the position as soon as was possible. Yet it is quite feasible to suggest that even out of this defeat he was able to snatch a victory for his long term viewpoint. His acceptance of the Milner plan was, as indicated earlier, in the form of a compromise. What he really desired was that Canada should be represented in Washington as a fully self-governing and autonomous nation, and therefore had suggested earlier that before Canada ventured into the realms of diplomatic practise her autonomous status should be confirmed. "Until Canada's national status is definitely established in the face of the world we had better not lay ourselves open to humiliating snubs by attempting to ignore the conventions and requirements of diplomatic practice with all

27. Dafoe Papers, Jan. 26, 1921, Dafoe to John A. Cooper.

its elaborate rules of precedence."²⁸ That was what actually happened. It was not until after the publication of the report of the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of the Imperial Conference of 1926 that the appointment was made.²⁹ After that accomplishment in Imperial relations it became possible for Canada to open an Embassy of her own at Washington, completely divorced from the British Embassy. At that time it also became possible to appoint a Minister who would be free of worries as to which Government he would be responsible to in the event of his having to take over the control of the British Embassy in the absence of the British Ambassador from Washington. Thus one might venture the suggestion that Mr. Dafoe was neither wrong nor unheeded, but rather that his aspirations as to the speed at which a statement specifically defining Dominion autonomy for the world were not met. Had that definition been secured six years earlier, as he demanded, the appointment to Washington might also have been made at that time.

iii. The Canadian Attack on Article Ten

The record of the dispute over Article X of the Covenant is a history of contradictions in interpretation by men who should have known better. After the drafting of the Article there immediately arose two groups of opinion in regard to it; there were those who favoured the Article and those who opposed it. Neither one would compromise with the other. Yet each read the text of the Article in their own way and therefore both read different things into it. Smuts' original plan for the Covenant contained no reference as to what Article X was later to mean. The Article was inserted into the Covenant at

28. M.F.P., Sept. 8, 1919, "Our Representative to Washington."
29. See below, ch. vi,

the insistence of President Wilson himself, with the able support of the French bloc at Paris.³⁰ Furthermore, although large elements of the Republican opposition to the Covenant suggested that the insertion of the Article was part of a British plot to trap the United States into future defence of the British Empire,³¹ it was the British Empire which most strenuously fought against its insertion in the Covenant.

Canada was to lead the opposition to Article X. Because of the wide-spread geographical extent of the Empire it would almost certainly have become involved in any conflict which arose in any part of the world. That being the case, under the Covenant, the British Empire would virtually have become the guarantor of world peace. That was a serious responsibility to which to agree. Canada herself had several reasons for her opposition to Article X.³² In the first place, she felt that she was voicing the opinion of several other nations which felt the same way as she did. Secondly, Canada realized her own apparent remoteness from danger and therefore objected to being a party to all the 'giving' whilst she might never 'receive' any benefits from the guarantee. Canada also believed in the British tradition that the country could not be committed in advance to any action, but that Parliament should decide each case as it arose. Finally, Canadian statesmen continued to adhere to the hope that since much of the United States Republican opposition to the League centered on the obligations of Article X, the elimination of this Article would speed the entry of the United

30. M.F.P., Sept. 4, 1919, "Article Ten of the Covenant."

31. Ibid.

32. G.P. de T. Glazebrook, A History of Canadian External Relations, C.I.I.A., (Toronto, 1950) p. 373.

States into the League.

The first Canadian action with regard to Article X appeared in the Borden memorandum on the draft Covenant to the British Empire delegation, on March 13, 1919,³³ and this was the line Canada was to follow continuously on that question. That policy was not without opposition. Hon. N.W. Rowell had stressed that the Council of the League should show that it had the courage to implement its own decisions by invoking the sanctions which might be necessary to clear up the Polish-Lithuanian dispute. He also spoke favourably of Article X and its powers in safeguarding Albanian integrity.³⁴ Hon. Rudolphe Lemieux^e had also spoken favourably of Article X, calling it "the teeth of the Covenant."³⁵ Nevertheless, these were only dissenting opinions. The majority of Parliament adhered to Borden's view. Parliament felt that the adoption of Article X would strip the Canadian Parliament of its prerogative to decide for Canada the future international action of this country; the adoption of Article X would put those prerogatives³⁶ into the hands of the Council of the League of Nations.

However serious these arguments might have appeared at the time, it was later indicated that they were of little value. If Article X was "the teeth of the Covenant" those teeth were already loose in their gums. The Article had been seriously watered down in its drafting. In defining the first clause of the article, a second clause was added by the drafters, at the

33. See above, p.26.

34. S. Mack Eastman, Canada at Geneva: An Historical Survey and its Lessons, (Toronto, 1946) pp. 58 ff.

35. Quoted in C.A.R., 1919, p. 107.

36. Canada, House of Commons Debates, (hereafter referred to as Debates, (HC)) Sept. 9, 1919.

instigation of the British delegates. By means of this second clause the Council could now only "advise" the plan and the means of enforcement of the territorial integrity and political independence of a nation. The advice did not necessarily imply complete obligation on the part of the member-states of the League.³⁷

Those quarrels did not impress Dafoe. He was a staunch supporter of the Article, even in its mutilated form. He believed that every member of the League had accepted obligations to protect the integrity and the independence of all other Members of the League, not only because of Article X, "but on account of the whole tenor of the document."³⁸ Neither did the tampered-with Article, in his opinion, circumvent the obligations of the members of the League to make military contributions when called upon to do so by the Council. "The point is not particularly conclusive; it makes the obligation moral, rather than legal; but no self respecting nation will take advantage of a loophole like this to escape an obligation."³⁹ Nor was this a recent opinion on his part. More than a year earlier he had written, in agreement with a war aims statement by Lloyd George calling for "all nations" to participate in a League of Nations which would embrace the concept of disarmament, arbitration, "and not merely to abide by it themselves, but to help to enforce it against any nation that dares to break it. That is the right policy after victory."⁴⁰ He defended the Article again

37. Zimmern, League of Nations, pp. 241-2.

38. M.F.P., Sept. 4, 1919, "Article Ten of the Covenant."

39. Ibid.

40. Statement made by David Lloyd George, Dec. 14, 1917; quoted in M.F.P., Aug. 3, 1918, "Remembrance Day."

very shortly after his return from Paris. This defence was based on the supposition that "in practice troops will -- in the main -- be supplied by the nations represented in the Council." Therefore, since unanimity within the Council is required before a decision can be reached, the fact that the Council had reached a unanimous decision would be the guarantee from its members that the troops would be forthcoming. This would in no way endanger the sanctity of any national prerogatives for the delegates to the Council would be speaking for⁴¹ their own governments and parliaments.

Bearing in mind this one thought of his in relation to Article X it is easy to see why he made no further editorial criticisms of Canadian attempts to amend or secure an interpretative resolution regarding their obligations under the Covenant. He was of the opinion that if troops were ever required of Canada, she would be considered as having a particular interest in a dispute and for that reason would have representation on the Council. In such an event the Canadian delegate to the Council would vote in its proceedings according to instructions received by him from the Government and Parliament of Canada.

Nevertheless, the Canadian Government would not accept this broad view of her obligations under the Article and continued to seek, first its rejection by the first Assembly, then, its amendment by the Third Assembly, and finally, when these were found impossible, an interpretative resolution which would remove the blanket obligation which the Government believed that

41. Dafoe, "Peacemaking," M.F.P., Apr. 15, 1919.

the Article imposed. By this time, after the War was over and the appetites for territorial aggrandizement of many of the victorious nations and succession states of Europe appeared still to be dissatisfied, many Canadians began to look⁴² at Europe as an incurably decadent and militaristic society. "Canada considered herself a 'producer' rather than a 'consumer' of security,"⁴³ and thus should not be expected to ruin herself over insoluble European conflicts. The interpretative resolution sought was lost in the Fourth Assembly by the veto of Persia, but the vote in favour of the resolution in effect killed the Article, for it was apparent that the majority of the members of the Assembly accepted the Canadian view that the "political and geographical circumstances of each state" be taken into account by the Council before requesting from them any military support.

iv. The Imperial Conference of 1921, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Washington Conference.

The most significant gains made by the Dominions in their advance to full autonomous status were made during 1921 and 1922, and it was Canada which led the way during the first part of the period, and as she faltered towards the end she was given support by South Africa, ably led by General Smuts.

Before the Conference met there was much to worry about by all concerned -- both Imperialists and Autonomists. This was the first post-war Conference to be called, and it might well have been that that meeting would decide as to what direction the future of the Empire would follow. It could either

⁴². Eastman, Canada at Geneva, p. 53.

⁴³. Riddell, World Security, p. 20.

turn towards more autonomy for the Dominions and India, or it might mean that a more centralist scheme of Empire would be adopted. Either was possible. The status of the Empire at that time rested upon the interpretation of Resolution IX of the Imperial War Conference of 1917 which would be adopted. Characteristically of compromise resolutions, it was worded in so nebulous a manner so that it could mean all things to all men.⁴⁴

It soon became obvious that the British Government and Press were determined to turn the Conference down the Centralist path. As early as July, 1920, Lord Milner had referred to the forthcoming conference as a "constituent assembly."⁴⁵ Dafoe disagreed violently. "The business of a Constituent Assembly is to draft a constitution for an organic whole. No such task awaits the gathering which is to assemble next year."⁴⁶ He believed that it was to be a Constitutional Conference. The danger of holding a constituent assembly would be that in such a body the Dominions would lose their national identity. That could not be allowed to happen. As early as 1917 he had written: "The Curtis proposition is that the British Empire shall be transformed into the British Nation and that Canada shall abandon her national status and become a province in that nation. Nation or province? This is the issue."⁴⁷ The issue had not changed since 1917. The Imperialists were already referring to the forthcoming conference as the first meeting of

44. Dawson, Dominion Status, p. 40.

45. M.F.P., Jul. 20, 1920, "Constitutional Conference of 1921."

46. Ibid.

47. J.W. Dafoe, "Our Future in the Empire," J.O. Miller, ed., The New Era in Canada, (Toronto, 1917) p. 290.

the "Imperial Peace Cabinet." They were trying to maintain that central control of Imperial policy which was established during the War. This nomenclature ascribed to the approaching conference did not suit Dafoe. He destroyed it with simple logic.

The British Empire is. . . not a legislative unit, nor can it ever become such a unit. Since it cannot have a common legislature it cannot have a common executive. This is a consequence which a good many people find hard to accept. They are reconciled to the impossibility of establishing any Imperial Parliament, but still cling to the idea that by some means an Imperial executive, qualified to deal finally with matters of large Imperial concern, domestic and external, can come into being in some such guise as an Imperial Cabinet or council. They will never really understand the Imperial problem until they divest their minds of this hope or hallucination./48

He saw only one course to be followed by the Empire. That was the path to complete equality of all the self-governing Dominions with Great Britain. It was this idea and no other that was inherent in Resolution IX. This equality, he felt, must be put into effect at the forthcoming conference.

Equality does not permit of qualification. You are equal or you are not. The next step which I presume will be taken by the Constitutional Conference when it meets shortly will be to make that equality a matter of formal affirmation. I believe. . . that it is desirable that that definition should be made with the least possible delay. . . We can not go forward with any large schemes of co-operation until the present somewhat indefinite status is cleared up and replaced by an understanding which will make clear not only to ourselves but to the outside world that the British Empire is a partnership of equal nations united in a partnership of consent./49

This equality could not take place in the form of any central executive. Such an executive could only exist in an emergency,

48. M.F.P., Sept. 4, 1920, "Equality and its Implications."

49. Dafoe, Empire Partnership.

and would only be a temporary expedient, as it was during the War, for "an Imperial Cabinet without an Imperial Parliament to which it would be responsible would be an anomaly too great to be permitted."⁵⁰

Still, opposition to the Centralist plans was not yet very general, and the plans therefore were continued. The intentions of the British Government became quite clear in Dafoe's mind when it was announced that Winston Churchill had replaced Lord Milner as Colonial Secretary. This post, Dafoe claimed, was a step down for the man who had been First Lord of the Admiralty. But since Churchill was given the office by his own choice he must have had some special plans for it so as to enhance his own career. These plans Dafoe began to attack unmercifully.⁵¹ The only such plan could have been that of Empire centralization and Dafoe immediately countered any such intention on Churchill's part by saying that actually there should be no need for having the Colonial Secretary having anything to do with the Dominions. With the recognition of the new condition of equality, Canadian Ministers should be free to deal with British Ministers "without any appearance or suggestion of any inferiority of status upon one side or the other,"⁵² and without having to go through the Colonial Office.

The attacks on any conception of an Imperial executive were continued until the Conference was under way. Dafoe continued to maintain that such an executive could not work. In

50. M.F.P., Dec. 30, 1919, "Not a Precedent for Peace."

51. M.F.P., Jan. 21, 1921, "Winston Churchill, Colonial Secretary;" May 5, 1921, "The Vision of Mr. Churchill;" May 23, 1921, "There is No Imperial Cabinet."

52. M.F.P., Jan. 21, 1921, "Winston Churchill, Colonial Secretary."

a cabinet the majority decision ruled. In any Imperial Conference each national representative retained the veto power on any decision.⁵³ After them their respective parliaments had the power of veto. This was the only possible procedure with equal and sovereign states.⁵⁴ In the event of disagreement, then there could not be common action. Thus, if there should be no agreement, the nations "must agree to disagree."⁵⁵ He further maintained that although the idea of a central executive was still being adhered to in Britain, none of the Dominion Prime Ministers had accepted that view. He continued, "Mr. Churchill and his advisers doubtless imagine that they are thus doing a great work for the Empire. They are, however, in actual fact, doing an immense disservice to the cause they think they are forwarding."⁵⁶

These editorials did not go unread in Ottawa. ^{The year} 1921 was an election year and Prime Minister Meighen's home constituency was at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, where the Free Press exercised great influence. Nor did they go unread or unpublicized in Great Britain, and as the cry arose in the Dominions against a "Peace Cabinet" the name of the gathering was changed officially to that of the "Conference of Prime Ministers."⁵⁷

As it became evident that the campaign against centrali-

53. A proper Cabinet had two other distinctive characteristics; it owed common responsibility to a single legislature, and its members are united by loyalty to a Prime Minister. The proposed Peace Cabinet had none of these characteristics and therefore could not be referred to as a Cabinet;

M.F.P., May 5, 1921, "The Vision of Mr. Churchill."

54. M.F.P., Apr. 8, 1921, "An Imperial Executive Not Practicable."

55. M.F.P., Jul. 20, 1921, "Constitutional Conference of 1921."

56. M.F.P., May 18, 1921, "Imperial Conference or Imperial Cabinet."

57. Dawson, Dominion Status, p. 43.

state of international alliances in the Pacific. "The sole link of a common king would not prevent war between those owing allegiance to him."⁶⁰

Dafoe's attack on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance has been since recognized as the greatest influence in Canada against the pact.⁶¹ In his criticisms of the Alliance his main point of emphasis was that it had "outworn its use" in that neither Germany nor Russia were any longer a threat in the Pacific.⁶² That fact could only give the impression that if the Alliance was aimed at anyone it was aimed at the United States, for, notwithstanding the clause in it which would have exempted Great Britain from going to war with the United States, there was still a danger of the British Empire finding itself at war with that country. This was possible because in the event that the United States was at war with Japan, China would almost certainly support her American ally, thus forcing Britain to honour the treaty as against China.⁶³ In that case Britain need not declare war on the United States, but there would be nothing to stop the United States from declaring war on Great Britain. Furthermore, the treaty was a defensive alliance and, therefore, "not in harmony with the new international spirit which [was] being encouraged."⁶⁴

60. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 20, 1919, J.S. Ewart to Dafoe.

61. "The clearest and best informed voice against renewal was that of the veteran Western Liberal editor Mr. J.W. Dafoe, of the Winnipeg [sic] Free Press. Unlike other Canadian journalists, he stuck by the issue throughout 1921 until it was settled at Washington so that his many readers on the Canadian prairies. . . were never allowed to ignore or forget it." J. Bartlet Brebner, "Canada, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Washington Conference," Political Science Quarterly, L, p. 50.

62. M.F.P., May 16, 1921, "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance."

63. Ibid.; see also Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, II, pp. 71-2.

64. Ibid.

Up to that time there was no public pronouncement as to what attitude would be taken by Prime Minister Meighen in regard to this matter. It was already known that Australasia favored renewal of the Alliance. Yet unofficial word, through the pen of Grattan O'Leary of the Ottawa Journal, a newspaper close to the Prime Minister's office, did suggest that Meighen would oppose renewal of the Treaty.⁶⁵ Dafoe commended this decision, saying that it was definitely representative of Canadian opinion.⁶⁶ By the end of June he expressed confidence that the Canadian view opposing the Alliance would prevail at London. "Apparently the Anglo-Japanese Treaty has been practically knocked out and a great measure of credit for this is coming. . . to Canada."⁶⁷

At no time during this struggle was Dafoe particularly interested in the benefits which might accrue to the Empire through such an alliance. He was more interested in the improvement in Anglo-American relations which would result with the scrapping of the Alliance. Nor was he interested in saving face in the Pacific with a tripartite agreement such as had been suggested by Meighen in February, 1921, but would accept such an arrangement if it could simplify matters. His main goal was the elimination of the existing agreement, in that it served no worth-while purpose at the moment, and at the same time, put Canada in a very uncomfortable position. If the treaty were to be continued, nothing could stop the nascent naval race, for it must be expected that the United States would try to make her-

65. Brebner, "Canada. . . and the Washington Conference," p. 46.

66. M.F.P., Jun. 17, 1921, "Canada, Australia and the Japanese Alliance."

67. Dafoe Papers, Jun. 30, 1921, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

self secure against any Anglo-Japanese combination against her. Dafoe saw a "deepening embitterment" in Anglo-American relations if a naval race should begin. "It is this that Canada, through her representatives in London, seeks to avert." Canada would not approve any alliance with Japan unless the United States was in agreement with it.⁶⁸ He therefore held that there should be no further delay in denouncing the treaty so that it would definitely terminate in 1922.⁶⁹ Dafoe also felt that the Canadian stand on the Alliance was having its effect not only in Canada, but also in Great Britain and the United States. "There was an instant rallying of British public opinion in favor of the Canadian position; with an immediate effect in the United States which may well have been responsible for Mr. Harding's momentous and history-making proposition for a series of conferences looking towards the settlement of the Pacific problem and a programme of genuine disarmament."⁷⁰

Thus Dafoe was highly satisfied with Prime Minister Meighen's efforts at the Conference regarding the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. This, however, was not to say that he was satisfied with some of Meighen's other actions whilst in London. Dafoe saw many dangers to exist at such a Conference and knew that it would take a very capable statesman to keep out of the pitfalls waiting there for him.

It will be, I judge, part of Churchill's policy to induce the overseas Dominions to consider the Mesopotamia problem, the question

68. M.F.P., Jul. 4, 1921, "Canada and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance."

69. M.F.P., Jul. 6, 1921, "Continuance of the Alliance."

70. M.F.P., Jul. 14, 1921, "Public Opinion Takes a Hand."

of the independence of Egypt and possibly the problems of India. They may be asked to take a hand in the Irish trouble. If the Dominion premiers were to do anything of the kind the consequence might be very awkward. . . because they would thereby assume a moral responsibility for policies which they approved which would compel them to implement their decisions in some practical fashion./71

A special caution went out to Meighen in that respect. He was warned against using either of the terms Imperial Cabinet or Conference of Prime Ministers in reference to the forthcoming gathering. It would be neither. It would be no different from any other Imperial Conference of the past and that was what it should be called. Meighen was further advised that as that was his first venture in external affairs, it would be wise to follow in the direction set out by Laurier and Borden;
72
in that way he could not go wrong.

One item, which by this time had become a constant demand of Dafoe's and which might well have been termed the battle cry of the Nationalist groups in the country, was still to be marked out as a necessary part of the business of the Conference. Dafoe called for a declaration by the British Government which would inform the world as to what the new status of the Dominions was.
73
Until this matter would be settled for all time, he felt, the six British Nations could not work effectively together at any high degree of efficiency. Until that time there would be internal differencesⁱⁿ with all the Dominions between the Nationalist and Imperialist groups.
74
Dafoe reiterated this demand on the eve of Meighen's departure for Great Britain. He said that

71. Dafoe Papers, May 18, 1921, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

72. M.F.P., Jun. 8, 1921, "The Representative of Canada."

73. M.F.P., Mar. 5, 1921, "Which Nobody Disputes."

74. Ibid.

a definition of status was required before the meeting of the Conference. If the Conference had any bearing on the matters to be considered by the proposed constitutional conference of 1922 the status of the Dominions would have to be made definite at the beginning.⁷⁵ He had great hopes for the Prime Ministers following the right policy as he himself judged it. "Naturally we are very well pleased with the attitude which Mr. Meighen has taken and trust he will stand firm when he reaches London. . . . I assume that Smuts and he will find themselves in the same boat and between them they will be able to block whatever scheme Churchill has in mind."⁷⁶

This optimism was not to last long. He soon came to the conclusion that Meighen had adopted a quixotic attitude at the Conference. "I have been particularly interested in Meighen's attempt to provide at one and the same time a voice for the Dominions in foreign policy and a theoretical diplomatic union for the Empire. . . . Of course, the whole scheme is utterly unworkable and I can hardly imagine it ever being tried."⁷⁷ Nevertheless, little harm was being done by this. Some progress was being made in spite of Meighen's wrong approach. He continued later: "Meanwhile the discussion is of value and the credit must go to Mr. Meighen that he has had the courage to insist upon Canada's right to determine her foreign policies in matters of prime importance to her."⁷⁸ Thus, in Dafoe's mind, Meighen was attempting impossibility by trying to effect a compromise which was illogical in itself. While Dafoe was

75. M.F.P., Jun. 10, 1921, "A Definition of Status Required."
76. Dafoe Papers, Jun. 14, 1921, Dafoe to Augustus Bridle.
77. Dafoe Papers, Jun. 30, 1921, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.
78. Ibid.

interested in seeing that Canada should secure complete control over her own foreign policies Meighen was trying to accomplish the same thing with an added effort towards continuing to maintain the diplomatic unity of the Empire.

Before being able to consider Dafoe's comments on the Conference itself, it is necessary to outline briefly the major accomplishments of that body.⁷⁹ As has already been noted, it was the intention of some more imperialistically minded individuals to try to make this Conference into the inaugural drive towards a centralized Empire. This attitude was doomed to failure largely^{because} of Canadian and South African opinion at the time. The main agenda for the Conference consisted of four major topics. First, it was to discuss the naval, military and air defences of the Empire. Secondly, arrangements were to be made for securing a common Imperial policy in foreign affairs. In the third place, the question of the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was to be discussed. Finally, the Conference was to prepare the composition, agenda, and meeting place for the proposed Constitutional Conference. The first and third of these topics were left to be decided after the Washington Conference, which was called while the Imperial Conference was still in session. On the second and last topics no actual decision was made. The Constitutional Conference was shelved and the idea of a common foreign policy for the Empire was to be derived by similar conferences in the future.

79. For a more detailed accounting of the developments at the Imperial Conference of 1921 see, C.A.R., 1921, pp. 210 ff., from which the author has selected the background information on this section.

The largest Canadian contribution to the Conference was in the part related to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Meighen fought from the start against its renewal against all the other Prime Ministers there, especially Hughes, Massey, and Lloyd George.⁸⁰ When the invitation to the Washington Conference arrived, Lloyd George began to lean towards Meighen's earlier argument that perhaps it might be in the best interests of the Empire to arrange for a multilateral agreement. At that point Meighen carried the Conference with him, although Hughes⁸¹ continued to doubt the advisability of the course adopted. This in itself was quite an achievement on the part of the Canadian Prime Minister for it soon became clear that the British Cabinet had already agreed within itself that the Alliance should be renewed, although modified in some form to meet the conditions of the Covenant of the League, and perhaps to satisfy the United States. Actually, the only reason for the matter being submitted to the Conference was so that the British Government would secure from the Dominions what they thought would be an automatic approval of this matter of high policy.⁸² Balfour himself, the British statesman who had much to do with the creation of the Alliance in 1902, did not believe that its value had vanished with the changes in the Asiatic situation brought about by the fall of the Russian Empire.⁸³

80. Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, II, pp. 65-77.

81. Ibid., pp. 77-80; Sir Auckland Geddes informed Lloyd George that Hughes, the American Secretary of State, "strongly disapproved of renewal of the Alliance, but was interested in tripartite action." See Brebner. "Canada and the Washington Conference," p. 55.

82. Ibid., pp. 53-4; see also G.P. de T. Glazebrook, "Canadian External Relations," Chester Martin, ed., Canada in Peace and War, C.I.I.A., (Toronto, 1941) p. 165.

83. Blanche E.C. Dugdale, Arthur James Balfour, II, (New York, 1937) p. 234.

Notwithstanding this major victory on Meighen's part, it was still considered at home that the Conference was a failure, especially so far as Canadian status was concerned. On October 7th, 1921, Sir Robert Borden noted that "the foreign policy of the Empire remains under the same direction and influence as before the War, and that is not what we intended should be the case when we took our stand in 1917; it is imperative that the old conditions should not go on." ⁸⁴ Considering Lloyd George's opinion as to what happened at this Conference, one cannot help but concur with that opinion if his satisfaction as to the accomplishments of the Conference is to be used as a yardstick. Several months after the Conference was over the British Prime Minister said in the House of Commons:

The sole control of Britain over foreign policy is now vested in the Empire as whole. . . . The advantage to us is that joint control means joint responsibility, and when the burden of Empire has become so vast it is well that we should have the shoulders of these young giants under the burden to help us along. . . . When we took part in the discussions at the Imperial Conference what struck us was this, that from the mere fact that representatives were there from the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, and from other ends of the world, with different interests, the discussion broadened into a world survey. That was an advantage.

Our troubles were Upper Silesia, the Ruhr Valley, Angora, and Egypt. They came there with other questions -- with the problems of the Pacific, Honolulu, the Philippines, Nagasaki and Peking. All these problems were brought into the common stock, and a wide survey was taken by all the representatives of the Empire, who would honour the

84. Quoted in C.A.R., 1921, p. 221. R.M. Dawson is even more harsh in his criticism. He wrote that although it was not to be an Imperial Cabinet, the Imperial Conference performed all the functions of one, including sitting in secret session and in its assertions that there was no need for a discussion of constitutional development since 1917.

the policy decided upon and support that policy when it was challenged./85

Thus, it becomes obvious that Dafoe's earlier advice was not followed. Meighen had fallen into the trap.⁸⁶

Dafoe himself was not yet aware of what had happened at the Conference. Shortly after its completion he commended Meighen for having settled there "beyond question" the fact "that we have passed out of the stage where the British Foreign Office determined our international responsibilities. We must now consciously take charge of our own affairs." This, he believed, was obvious because of Meighen's

vindication of the right of Canada, through her parliament, to pass upon the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, should it be renewed. This was a reaffirmation of the policy laid down by Sir Robert Borden with regard to the Treaty of Versailles; and it may now be accepted as a fixed rule. This becomes the corner stone of the foreign policy which we shall now develop; that the final and determining voice in all things relating to Canada's foreign relations rests with the Canadian parliament./87

"It was, in fact" he later said, "a declaration of independence for Canada in the field of foreign affairs."⁸⁸

His anger at having been 'taken in' by Meighen's failure to impart any information as to what was achieved at the Conference erupted after he had read the Lloyd George speech quoted above. He could not agree with those decisions. "Mr. Lloyd George has proclaimed [them] as the accepted law of the Empire." But, he continued, "these decisions have never been considered by the Canadian people or by the Canadian Parliament. They were agreed to by a Canadian premier who was

85. Quoted in Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, II, p. 63.

86. See above, pp. 65-6.

87. M.F.P., Aug. 11, 1921, "The Recent Imperial Conference."

88. M.F.P., Aug. 27, 1921, "The Dominions and Foreign Policy."

holding the position pro tem, and had no mandate from the Canadian Parliament to discuss or consent to constitutional modifications of any kind. . . . That the consent will never be obtained we take the liberty of predicting." ⁸⁹ The question of obtaining Dominion autonomy in the matter of foreign policy was now to wait until the Imperial Conferences of 1923 and 1926, and during the interim period some important precedents would be set towards the attainment of that end.

The "period of tentative centralization" came to a close with the events of the Washington Conference. Had there been any opportunity for the Imperialists to effect some sort of centralization of the Empire, the last one would have been at that Conference. After that events moved too fast for there to be another chance. The Washington Conference opened with a snub to the autonomous status of the Dominions, and closed with their separate status having been recognized by the United States, the country which had refused them recognition in 1919 and 1920. When the United States Senate ratified the instruments of the Washington Conference it also recognized the separate signature of the British Dominions and India thereon.

The Washington Conference was one of the great landmarks of international co-operation. The question of disarmament had to be thrashed out for the three great naval powers of the world, the British Empire, the United States, and Japan, were embarking on an expansive naval race. Although arms races are serious matters at any time, in that they generally lead to conflict, that arms race had a more immediate importance in that it was being begun just at a time when the world had

89. M.F.P., Jan. 3, 1922, "Dominion Status and Foreign Policy."

entered into a grave economic depression. No country could afford excessive naval expenditures; least of all Britain, for she had just come out of a very expensive war which, while it had improved the economic positions of both the United States and Japan, had cost Britain her position as the predominant economic power in the world. But the United States was determined to build the largest navy in the world. She was very deeply concerned over Japanese expansion in the Pacific as a result of her war gains. Thus Japan and Britain were both forced to follow suit in order to try to maintain their relative position. The only way of stopping the naval race was by establishing a balance of power in the Pacific Area. Since it was the Anglo-Japanese Alliance that the United States was most afraid of in the Pacific, Britain agreed to discuss her policy in that regard with the United States, along with any proposals submitted for naval disarmament. Indeed, in March, 1921, the First Lord of the Admiralty had stated in Parliament that if the United States invited the British Empire to come to an agreement on naval armaments he would put aside all other business to help the movement forward. Lloyd George had repeated the offer at the Imperial Conference.⁹⁰ When the invitation arrived in early July to attend a naval disarmament conference in Washington Lloyd George saw it as being the elixir which would cure two of the problems of his Government; the impending naval race and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. As a result the Conference was soon changed from being one on naval disarmament alone to being a conference which aimed at a long term settle-

90. Dugdale, Balfour, II, p. 232.

ment of all Pacific Ocean problems as well.

The question of the status of the Dominions arose as soon as the invitations to the Conference were issued. None of the Dominions was invited to attend. Neither was the invitation addressed to the British Empire; it was addressed to the Government of Great Britain alone.

The resentment of the Dominions was soon evident. Was this a deliberate snub on the part of the United States? Was the President following in the tradition of his party's snub and non-recognition of the Dominions in 1919 and 1920? Or was the lack of a separate invitation to the Dominions the result of an inadvertency on the part of the State Department which would soon be corrected? If the former were the case it would have meant that the status of the Dominions remained imperfect, for it was not recognized by the greatest Power in the world. In either event, lack of representation of the Dominions would have been very dangerous to the Empire because it would have been committed to a certain limitation in naval armaments without the Dominions having agreed.⁹¹ Whatever the reasons were for the form in which the invitation arrived there could be no doubt that the Dominions had a real and important interest in the proposed conference.

At Paris. . . the United Kingdom was more closely concerned than other members of the British Commonwealth in most of the negotiations. At Washington, on the other hand, these [Dominions] which bordered on the Pacific had perhaps even greater interests at stake than the people of the British Isles, and their delegates took a more active and prominent part than they seemed inclined to take when European

91. Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, II, p. 84.

questions were under consideration./92

There were varied opinions expressed by eminent people, both at home and abroad, as to whether the Dominions were entitled to separate representation at Washington. Sir Clifford Sifton was of the opinion that Canada could have no grievance against the United States, as it was "not the business of foreign countries to go to the trouble of finding out what our status is."⁹³ That, we should have been able to define for them. The Montreal Gazette claimed that it was only correct for Britain alone to be invited and "to bring with him as many of his children as he thought proper."⁹⁴ Two years earlier Lord Milner, while Colonial Secretary, said that he was "certain that in the future the British Dominions [would] be independently represented in international affairs."⁹⁵ Sir Robert Borden thought that the procedure which would prevail would be the same as at Paris,⁹⁶ and Rowell felt that while the invitation was addressed to the Government of Great Britain, because of common diplomatic practice, it was only natural that it should be treated as an invitation to the British Empire.⁹⁷

Apparently Lloyd George did not concur with those opinions. There is ample evidence to suggest that the "insult" to the Dominions was largely of his manufacture. When Secretary of State Hughes suggested to him that six might be a good number for full representation of the Empire at the Conference, Lloyd

92. A.J. Toynbee, A Survey of International Affairs, 1920-23, (London, 1924) pp. 454-5.

93. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 8, 1921, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

94. Quoted in Round Table, XII, p. 393.

95. C.A.R., 1919, p. 136.

96. Robert L. Borden, Canada in the Commonwealth, p. 113.

97. Newton W. Rowell, The British Empire and World Peace, (Toronto, 1922) p. 180.

George replied that he and Lord Curzon would constitute an adequate delegation for the Empire, and he did not change his mind until after much controversy had been aroused in the Dominions.⁹⁸ Even after that the Dominions continued to remain uncertain of their status at Washington. Similar information as to Lloyd George's responsibility was given by Hon. T.A. Crerar, the national leader of the Progressive Party. He had been informed that the British Government had considered invitation of the Dominions as not acceptable to it.⁹⁹ Dafoe himself had information from the Washington correspondent of the Free Press, whose source was President Harding himself, to the effect "that Great Britain had vetoed any separate invitation being issued to Canada."¹⁰⁰ Dafoe also considered the possibility that the omission of sending separate invitations to the Dominions might have been a deliberate policy of President Harding's. If this was so it would not have been because Harding was unwilling to have the Dominions represented, but rather because he would have found the separate invitations hard to explain to the people as a result of the Republican party's objections to the League on the basis of the six British votes there.¹⁰¹

General Smuts was the first public official to condemn this departure from precedent and considered it a "direct challenge to Dominion status."¹⁰² Dafoe, at about the same time, accused Meighen of destroying much of the great work of his predecessors in the struggle for Dominion status. He accused

98. Carter, British Commonwealth and Security, p. 48.

99. Dafoe Papers, Oct. 14, 1921, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

100. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 11, 1921, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

101. M.F.P., Sept. 13, 1921, "Canada and the Washington Conference."

102. C.A.R., 1921, p. 116.

him of either "ignorance, weakness, or design" in doing this.¹⁰³ For unlike General Smuts, Meighen made no public protest of this form of handling the Dominions, and with his inaction might have implied tacit consent.

Although Sir Robert Borden was the third British delegate at the Conference, Dafoe stated that he was not a representative of Canada, but rather a Canadian representative of the British Empire, and Meighen, by accepting that form of representation, which "discredits if it does not nullify, all the advances, which were won by the Union Government", was giving support to the United States view that Canada was in the League of Nations "under false pretences,"¹⁰⁴ By this time Dafoe was convinced that the Empire representation was engineered in London at the Imperial Conference and with the concurrence of the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand, after the departure of both Smuts and Meighen.¹⁰⁵ Still, that did not remove any of the obligations on Meighen's part to object vigorously at the action thus taken. Dafoe condemned him for his silence in that affair and insisted that Canada should have followed the example of South Africa and refuse to be bound by any of the decisions of the Conference until the Dominions had secured the right of separate representation to it.

Once secured, the indefiniteness of the position held by the Dominion delegates at the Conference was soon noticed.

103. M.F.P., Oct. 14, 1921, "Canada and the Washington Conference."

104. M.F.P., Oct. 20, 1921, "Canada's Position Compromised," Oct. 25, 1921, "Giving Up the Pass."

105. M.F.P., Nov. 1, 1921, "Was It Arranged in London?" May 12, 1922, "Smuts' Service to Canada;" Dafoe also wrote privately expressing the same opinion; Dafoe Papers, Apr. 18, 1922, Dafoe to J.S. Ewart.

Sir Robert Borden was not playing as important a part there as he did at Paris, although Canadian interests were more deeply involved at Washington. That had the effect of diminishing "the stature of this Dominion as an international person Professor Skelton. . . confessed himself unable to understand from the various announcements whether Sir Robert represented the British Empire or Canada or nobody."¹⁰⁶

Finally, when the Dominions were invited separately to sign the Four Power Treaty which settled the international tension in the Pacific and effected the denunciation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, thus confirming their right to separate representation at the Conference, Dafoe wrote that the Canadian people need give no thanks to Meighen for it; Smuts was the only Prime Minister who protested strongly; and the only strong objections raised in Canada were unofficial. "It must. . . be an occasion of humiliation to Canadians that their own public men consented supinely to a proceeding so detrimental to their interests; and that we owe the regularization of our status at Washington to the alertness and courage of General Smuts in far off South Africa."¹⁰⁷

Thus, the status of the Dominions was confirmed at the Washington Conference. The separate representation, separate signature, and the separate ratification of the instruments resulting from the Washington Conference by the Dominions, and the acceptance of this fact by the United States, which had formerly refused to recognize the independent status of the

106. M.F.P., Jan. 24, 1922, "Canada at the Washington Conference," Jan. 30, 1922, "Dominions Representation at Washington." In the latter Dafoe claimed that Borden served "not as the direct representative of Canada, but as the Canadian expert of the British delegation."

107. M.F.P., Dec. 13, 1921, "A Change of Status at Washington?"

Dominions, indicated that they had achieved the recognition¹⁰⁸ of that country in post-war negotiations. This international recognition was substantiated only a short time later when the British Dominions received separate invitations from the Italian Government to attend the Genoa Economic Conference in the spring of 1922.

The results of this affair were significant to the Dominions not only in the realm of international affairs, but also in the matter of the status of the Dominions within the Commonwealth. Here Dafoe saw two distinct and differing possibilities. In the first place the events relating to Dominion representation might have indicated a definite inferiority in the status of the Dominions as compared to Great Britain. Borden had been appointed as the representative of Canada, by order in council after the Smuts protest, by the King advised by the Canadian Government. But Balfour and Lord Lee were appointed by the King, advised by his British Ministers, with no limitations to their plenipotentiary powers, as the representatives of the British Empire at large. Thus they could also have represented Canada, and, having more complete powers, might possibly have overridden Borden. This possibility might reduce "to a nullity the claim of equality of status between Canada and Great Britain and puts Sir Robert Borden in a position of subordination and relative powerlessness." Therefore it was evident that the status of the Dominions must be defined. "That must be a definition of full nationhood or Canada must retire from the international arena and formally accept a position of

108. Canada, Sessional Papers, 1922, 47, "Report of the Canadian Delegate to the Washington Conference."

colonial subordination," Dafoe wrote, "but putting the¹⁰⁹ clock of time back is not an easy thing to do."

Secondly, however, Dafoe held that the Washington Conference was proof that the Centralist view point could not work. The attempt to introduce it was seen in the original intention of having the entire Empire represented by a British Empire delegation. Once it was conceded that the Dominions were entitled to individual representation the Centralist cause was lost.

The device of having all the foreign affairs of all the British nations attended to by the foreign office of one of them and subject to its control has broken down upon its first trial. . . . A common foreign office or a centralized empire is theoretically feasible but politically impracticable, as everyone knows. The only road left, which circumstances will compel them to take, is for each British nation to look after its own foreign affairs, which will in no way prevent common action upon large issues of common concern./110

This was to be his consistent policy in the future. His battle-standard continued to be one of equality and co-operation; but before the co-operation could be possible, the equality must be recognized. "The relationship between Canada and the Crown must be the same as the relationship between Great Britain and the Crown; between these two nations there must be no prescriptive¹¹¹ rights of control, but complete equality."

109. M.F.P., Feb. 22, 1922, "Canada in International Conferences."

110. M.F.P., Jan. 24, 1922, "Canada and the Washington Conference."

111. M.F.P., Feb. 11, 1922, "The Dominions and Foreign Policy."

CHAPTER IV

ADOPTING THE POWERS AND PREROGATIVES OF AN AUTONOMOUS NATION

During the years of 1920-22 the attempt to establish an Imperial executive on a permanent basis had failed. The succeeding events, where Canada was concerned, were to be turned towards progressive decentralization in Imperial affairs. During the preceding period the events which took place were, for the large part, haphazard, hesitant and experimental ventures into a world new to Canada, the world of international relations. The steps taken during the next two or three years, beginning with the Chanak incident, were deliberate acts, with all opportunities being grasped and advantageously used, in steering the Dominion towards her goal of national autonomy. Throughout this period, and since 1917, the policy of the Free Press was to assume that the national status of Canada was all that was claimed for it "and put it in strong contrast with our legal position as set out in the document [Resolution Nine of the Imperial War Conference of 1917]. This lends irresistible force to the argument that the law must be modernized to suit the facts."¹ Eventually that was to be the result.

i. The Chanak Incident

The Chanak incident was to be the first of several successive events which led towards complete Dominion autonomy. At that time the Liberal administration, under the leadership of W.L. Mackenzie King, had recently taken office. Some six weeks before the Chanak problem was made public, Dafoe had

1. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 3, 1920, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton; see also Dafoe, Clifford Sifton, p. 462.

already made known his opinions with regard to the forthcoming events. He stated that Lloyd George had been wrong in saying that the Dominions had a voice in Empire foreign policy and would therefore bear some of the responsibility. He demanded that Canadian status be defined so that Canada would know where she stood in relation to foreign affairs. Canada should not, he claimed, be able to interfere in British actions.² He felt that a definition of status was absolutely necessary for at that date, more than three years after Canadian participation at Paris as an equal, Dafoe admitted privately that Canadian status was really "one of subordination."³

The Near Eastern situation was not unfamiliar to Dafoe. He had acquired much "inside" information about it while at Paris in 1919, and from his knowledge, by and large, he generally sympathized with the British attitude towards the Nationalist Government of Turkey. If any responsibility was to be fixed for the situation regarding Turkey and Armenia, "a good big share of it" must be placed "squarely on the people of the United States" for having shirked their international responsibilities, especially in that part of the world.⁴

When events in Turkey reached a climax and Britain was faced with possible war the Canadian Government claimed that they were entirely uninformed about developments in that part of the world. That was only partially true. What they sought may have been official information from the Foreign Office in London; but that is not to say that the Government of Canada

2. M.F.P., Aug. 1, 1922, "Canada's Status as a Grown-Up."

3. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 28, 1922, Dafoe to A.E. Zimmermann.

4. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 6, 1922, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

was not informed as to the events, or as to what dangers were involved. The daily press across the country carried continuous dispatches from reporters in the Near East and from both official and unofficial sources in London. The Government of Canada was warned also at home by a rather astute political observer. "Three months ago at Ottawa," wrote Sir Clifford Sifton, "I said the Canadian government was liable to get a telegram calling upon it to take part in a war in Asia Minor. It was taken somewhat as a joke, but the telegram apparently is here."⁵ Thus, there can be little doubt that the main objection to the British Government's policy was more "to the unusual course taken by the Imperial Government in issuing a statement to the press before the Dominion governments had time to answer the dispatch, a method which. . . seemed to many to be an appeal over the heads of Dominion governments to their people."⁶

The Government's attitude was from the start of a non-committal and delaying nature. Mackenzie King asked for more information and also whether the situation was serious enough to merit a special session of Parliament, which would decide whether or not Canada would participate actively.⁷ The British Government replied that that would be unnecessary.⁸ Had the Canadian Government acted otherwise and unquestionably supported the British action, as did the Antipodean Dominions, it would undoubtedly have encountered the vigorous opposition of the Free Press. Dafoe had already made up his mind on the situa-

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5. Dafoe Papers, Sept. 18, 1922, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.
 6. R.A. MacKay and E.B. Rogers, Canada Looks Abroad, C.I.I.A., (Toronto, 1938) p. 85.
 7. Round Table, XIII, p. 176.
 8. Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, II, p. 116.

tion, and when Sir Clifford Sifton, who immediately saw all the ramifications involved, suggested a line of policy for the Free Press, the editor readily agreed. Sir Clifford wired to Winnipeg: ". . . The policy of the Free Press must be one of opposition to sending troops. This is understandable and final. In my judgement the whole question of autonomy vs entanglement in European and Asiatic wars must be fought out now. I don't believe the Canadian people will stand for the folly that is proposed." He closed with a postscript. "Of course the idea of sending a small contingent is worse than taking part on a considerable scale. We should probably get news someday that it was captured or massacred and then all Canada would resound with a demand for vengeance."⁹

Thus, instead of opposition, the Government was favoured with the support of the Free Press. Dafoe "justified" its stand in "objecting to being the recipient of hurry up messages of this kind." He supported its determination to bring the matter before Parliament before acting. He felt that since France, Italy, Jugo-Slavia, all signatories of the Treaty of Sèvres, did not think the situation called for immediate action, Canadians had no reason to become "wildly excited at this stage." Finally, he upheld the same view that the Government was later to take; that the Dominions had no "moral responsibility to aid in repairing every mishap which may attend British operations in areas of the world in which we have no direct interest whatever."¹⁰

The official Canadian reaction, unlike that of Austra-

9. Dafoe Papers, Sept. 18, 1922, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.
10. M.F.P., Sept. 20, 1922, "Canada and Constantinople."

lasia, was relatively cool and inquiring. Within a short time the only conflicts which remained were those being thrashed out on the floors of the Parliaments of the Empire.¹¹ In Great Britain it was soon learned that the appeal to the Dominions was sent out, not only without any previous consultation with them over the matter, but also with the knowledge of only three or four members of the Home Cabinet.¹² In Canada the Government was severely criticized for its attitude by the Conservative opposition, while it received the support of its own party and the Progressive and Labour parties.¹³ Referring to Meighen's charges on moral grounds, and as Canada was a signatory of the Treaty of Sèvres,¹⁴ King replied that Meighen was in error; that the legislation passed by the Canadian House was merely enabling legislation, and that Canada was not bound by the Treaty inasmuch as it had never come into force because of its repudiation by the Turks and its non-ratification by Great Britain.¹⁵

The constitutional issue, however, was the one of major importance. The question involved was that of the right of any part of the Empire to maintain an attitude of passive beligerency while some other part of the Empire was at war. The

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11. For an account of actions and criticisms in the several Dominions and the United Kingdom regarding their governments' policies on Chanak, see Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, II, pp. 114 ff; Toynbee, British Empire Foreign Relations, pp. 46 ff; Dawson, Dominion Status, pp. 234-51; C.A.R., 1922, pp. 179-88.
 12. Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, II, 131-2; see also John S. Ewart, "War Entanglements," Independence Papers, II, (Ottawa, no date) pp. 160-2.
 13. C.A.R., 1922, p. 184; see also Carter, British Commonwealth and Security, p. 86.
 14. Toynbee, British Empire Foreign Relations, p. 51.
 15. Canada, House of Commons Debates, (hereafter referred to as Debates, (HC)) 1924, p. 2935; see also C.A.R., 1922, p. 185.

Chanak episode was the first test of the scheme for diplomatic unity of the Empire, and since it failed it became evident that "the scheme outlined in 1921 simply would not work."¹⁶ So far as Canada was concerned it was apparent that the Liberal party was following the Laurier policy of not committing Canada in advance to agree to participate in any British war.¹⁷ Chanak was the first instance of this policy being followed after a request for assistance was received, and with that the centralists' hopes for an Empire united in its foreign relations were dashed. Canada was to lead the way in the future towards Commonwealth decentralization and Dominion nationalism.¹⁸

Dafoe's attitude, as has already been stated, was one of full support for the position taken by the Government. In that spirit he was also able to encourage it further in its steps towards national autonomy. He not only encouraged but he often led, or at least, anticipated many of its future actions. Regarding the Chanak affair itself, he considered Lloyd George's appeals as little more than a lot of unnecessary "sabre-rattling". Great Britain did not need any military assistance to save the Straits and Constantinople. No troops were necessary. There were already powerful British warships patrolling those waters and the Kemalist army did "not possess even a row boat." In that position how could it cross the Dardanelles or the Bosphorus to Eastern Thrace?¹⁹ Neither did he agree with the argument about Canadian obligation because of her participation in the making of the Treaty of Sèvres. The Canadian part was

16. Dawson, Dominion Status, p. 64.

17. MacKay and Rogers, Canada Abroad, p. 86.

18. Carter, British Commonwealth and Security, p. 87.

19. M.F.P., Sept. 23, 1922, "Some Highly Relevant Facts."

purely technical and the only reason Canada signed the Treaty was because she was at war with Turkey on Britain's declaration. Nor was it Canada's duty to enforce its terms. The treaty-making Powers were Britain, France, Italy and Greece, and provisions in it stated that its enforcement was the responsibility of the three Great Powers.²⁰ Furthermore, he indicated that there was no reason for anyone to enforce the Treaty because an "agreement between Britain, France, and Italy has revised the Turkish border" since that treaty was signed.²¹ So well did Dafoe carry out his defence of the Government that Sir Clifford Sifton wrote him, suggesting that he tone down his editorials.

You have done your work; more effectually than you have any idea of. The whole press of Canada was on the verge of a hysterical shriek for war. I think the danger is over. Your articles have been the admiration of the whole country and have made thousands of converts. But if you have any fault in these matters it is in driving the argument too hard. That won't do in this case. Let the people alone now. Let them think. They will come out all right./22

To Meighen's "ready, aye, ready" stand, Dafoe provided a powerful answer. He quoted the letter sent by Sir John A. Macdonald to Sir Charles Tupper, wherein Sir John refused to contribute troops to the British venture in the Soudan in 1885, and indicated the parallels between that situation and the later one. That letter read, in part:

We do not stand at all in the same position as Australasia. The Suez Canal is nothing to us, and we do not ask England to quarrel with

20. M.F.P., Sept. 25, 1922, "France and the Turks: A Sorry Tale."

21. M.F.P., Oct. 3, 1922, "A Big Job for Canada."

22. Dafoe Papers, Oct. 4, 1922, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

France or Germany for our sakes. . . . Why should we waste money and men in this wretched business. England is not at war, but merely helping the Khedive to put down an insurrection, and now that Gordon is gone, the motive of aiding in a rescue of our countrymen is gone with him. Our men and money would, therefore, be sacrificed to get Gladstone and Company out of the hole they have plunged themselves into by their own imbecility./23

Dafoe stated that the precedent of the action of Canada on the matter of Chanak was, in effect, a declaration of "our freedom of decision and action. We have repudiated the theory of [sic] Imperial foreign policy. . . ." ²⁴

In retrospect, Dafoe wrote that since the action of the British Government was not endorsed by the Cabinet the bad publicity it got would have turned the people against it. Had a war resulted that war would have been repudiated by the people. That was proved by the fact that the people were so opposed to the policy of Lloyd George that they turned him out of office within a few months after the event. Had the Dominions all co-operated with this scheme of "government of the Empire by an Imperial cabinet," "a superficial appearance of political unity, thus obtained, would have done incalculable damage to the moral unity which is the real strength of the Commonwealth." "In Great Britain it needed but this further adventure to crystallize the general feeling that the country would be better served by a more sober-minded administration. Lloyd George fell and Bonar Law came in, pledged to a regime of 'tranquillity'." ²⁵ So convinced was Dafoe that that "moral

23. M.F.P., Dec. 5, 1922, "A Voice from the Past."

24. M.F.P., Feb. 5, 1923, "Canadian Self-Government and War."

25. J.W. Dafoe, "The Rise of the Commonwealth," M.F.P., Aug. 3, 1925.

unity" was the most important tie of the Empire that he wrote that if it was replaced by more formal bonds "the Commonwealth would disintegrate within fifty years."²⁶

ii. The Lausanne Negotiations

Although the Lausanne controversy ran beyond another subject, the Imperial Conference of 1923, which will be dealt with later in this chapter, it is being covered at this point because it follows directly from the events of the Chanak incident, and its negotiations also ran concurrently with the two phases of Imperial relations which will follow this section.

The Lausanne Conference was called shortly after the Chanak incident, in the autumn of 1922, in order to arrive at a settlement of the Near Eastern problem. There were no invitations issued to any of the Dominions, thus causing a reversal of the precedents of 1919 and 1921. In addition, Canada was notified by the British Government that the Dominions could not be invited and Mackenzie King was confidentially informed that the reason for this policy was that the French Government had insisted on it, unless the French non-self-governing colonies and protectorates of Algeria, West Africa, and Tunisia were also represented.²⁷ Hence, the Dominions were confronted with a fait accompli about which they could do nothing.

Instead of reacting as did Prime Minister Smuts in 1921, Mackenzie King did not object to the procedure, but rather began to move in a path which would lead to new constitutional

26. Dafoe Papers, Jan. 8, 1923, Dafoe to J.S. Brierley.

27. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 14, 1923, A personal memorandum drawn up on this day records similar information given confidentially to Dafoe in a conversation with Mackenzie King and Ernest Lapointe at Ottawa; see also Toynbee, British Empire Foreign Relations, p. 86.

developments. The Canadian Government informed the Colonial Secretary that "the extent to which Canada may be held to be bound by the proceedings of the conference or by the provisions of any treaty or other instrument arising out of the same, is necessarily a matter for the Parliament of Canada to decide," and that that right of Parliament could not be affected in any way.²⁸ This stand was further clarified. Parliament would desire, the Government cabled, "as respects the Treaty with Turkey. . . to reserve to itself the right to decide upon the merits of the case what action on the part of the people of Canada is right and proper."²⁹

The Dominions were not represented in any way at the conference. On the contrary, they were informed that the delegates sent by the British Government were "fully acquainted with the Imperial aspects of the problem and with the keen interests taken by the Dominion Governments in its solution,"³⁰ and thus intimating that no advice from the Dominions would be necessary. Nevertheless, the British Government expected that the Dominions would sign and ratify the new Treaty with Turkey.³¹ The Canadian Government denied having any such desire. Canada did not agree that this matter should be handled in a similar manner as was adopted with the Treaty of Versailles and the agreements resulting from the Washington Conference. Because the procedure followed at those conferences was not the same as the procedure followed at Lausanne, the Canadian Government took the view that "in the opinion of the countries by whom the

28. Canada, Sessional Papers, 1924, No. 232, p. 6.

29. Ibid., p. 7.

30. Ibid., p. 5.

31. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

invitations. . . [to Lausanne] were extended, Canada could not have been believed to have the direct and immediate interest which she was supposed to have in the conference at Versailles and Washington." On this ground Canada refused to participate in the Treaty.³² These opinions were accepted by the Government of Great Britain, which agreed that only the British plenipotentiaries who had negotiated the Treaties should sign them.³³ This procedure was concurred with by all the Dominions.³⁴

Having stated its position Ottawa now awaited developments. After the Conference ended the Canadian Government ignored the requests of the Colonial Secretary that the approval of the Canadian Parliament be secured before ratification of the Treaties by the King.³⁵ They later stated that they had no intention of submitting the Treaties before Parliament. "This," the message stated, "appears to be in harmony with the resolution of the recent Imperial Conference."³⁶ King admitted in the House of Commons that the Treaty bound Canada, but that the moral obligations resting on Canada would be vastly different to the moral obligations which were imposed upon the country under the Treaty of Versailles, "having regard to the different manner in which the whole negotiations were carried on."³⁷

Dafoe had "inside" information on this matter, which was given to him by King and Lapointe in Ottawa in April, 1923.³⁸

32. Ibid., p. 9.

33. Ibid.

34. Toynbee, British Empire Foreign Relations, pp. 89-90.

35. Canada, Sessional Papers, 1924, No. 232, pp. 10-11.

36. Ibid., p. 11; for clarification of the reference to the Imperial Conference see below, pp. 101 ff.

37. Debates, (HC) 1924, pp. 2928-9; the full debate on the Lausanne negotiations extends pp. 2923-90.

38. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 14, 1923, Personal memorandum; see above, p. 89, note.

He therefore knew what the problem was, and what the intentions of the Government were regarding its future action, and was prepared to deal with it understandingly when the controversy arose. Because of the confidential nature of this information he made no comments about the affair until twelve months³⁹ later when the information was made public.

When that time came, he declared himself in complete agreement with the Government. This, he wrote, was a first class example of the working of the new Empire treaty-making arrangement as decided upon at the Imperial Conference of 1923. The refusal of the Canadian Government to ask Parliament to ratify the Treaty established the fact that it was possible "for one or more British nations to enter into treaties with other countries without involving other British nations of the Commonwealth which do not regard the matter dealt with as their particular concern." He added that since the Dominions were not invited to be represented or to tender advice, "the treaty is therefore apart from Canada, unless this country chooses, by action of her parliament, to identify herself with the treaty and its commitments."⁴⁰ With regard to a statement by Ramsay Macdonald that Lord Curzon had represented Canada at the conference, he countered: "The Dominions were not invited to the Lausanne conference. . . . If such an invitation had been extended Canada would have either accepted or declined. . . . Instead, Lord Curzon went alone to Lausanne. The central fact

39. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 11, 1924, Dafoe to Grant Dexter; Dafoe wrote: "I have known right along that it was the intention of the Canadian Government not to assume any obligations as a result of the Lausanne Conference. Mr. King and Mr. Lapointe told me so a year ago in Ottawa."

40. M.F.P., Apr. 4, 1924, "Canada and the Lausanne Treaty."

in Mr. King's statement is the declaration that in thus going to Lausanne Lord Curzon had no authority to act for, or to bind, Canada."⁴¹

In the controversy which ensued between Canada and Great Britain on this matter Dafoe placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the British Government. Canada had requested permission from Great Britain to make public the documents on this matter. The British Government did not concur, but still insisted that Lord Curzon represented Canada at the Conference. Dafoe retorted: "The best way to settle the difference is to produce the documents. The presumption of accuracy must be on the side of the party which is willing to be judged by the written record. The Canadian contention ought to be accepted or the documents disproving it made public."⁴² After these documents were produced he again voiced his "approval"; "The language used by the Canadian Government was so clear that it is difficult to understand how any misunderstanding could arise."⁴³ More than a year later, he continued to adhere to the view that the British Government was entirely to blame for the affair. He suggested that it did not insist on the Dominions being represented because it was "still under the spell of the idea that it was the executive section of an Imperial cabinet" which could speak for "all the governments of the Empire." Dafoe maintained, in this respect, that if the Dominions were to be partners to the Empire's foreign policy, "the corollary that this was conditional upon real participation and actual consent

41. M.F.P., Apr. 10, 1924, "The Discussion About the Lausanne Treaty."

42. M.F.P., May 5, 1924, "The Lausanne Despatches."

43. M.F.P., May 31, 1924, "Protecting Canadian Rights."

given before not after the determination of policy" was also true.⁴⁴

As regards the significance of the events, one question seemed to bother him. He could not make up his mind on what Canada's status as regards Turkey was to be. "There is. . . an added complexity in the matter of this particular Treaty," he wrote to Grant Dexter, "because Canada is still technically at war with Turkey and the question arises how that status is to be terminated if the Lausanne Treaty is not ratified."⁴⁵ Two months later he wrote that it appeared to be that Canada came "under the operation of the treaty so far as the termination of the state of war with Turkey is concerned."⁴⁶ But he was not bothered about the way out from that problem. That aspect of the situation was equally clear to him in both cases. He insisted that it was obligatory that the status of the Dominions be "formally regularized." Until that time they would remain in the anomalous position of claiming to be international bodies, yet having no individual control over their foreign policies. The need for a constitutional declaration on the new status of the Dominions still prevailed.⁴⁷

iii. The Halibut Treaty

While Mackenzie King was in correspondence with the British Government regarding the Lausanne Conference and Treaty, well knowing that in that case he intended not to participate in an Imperial treaty because Canada did not engage in its negotiation, a new opportunity presented itself by which he

⁴⁴. Dafoe, "Rise of the Commonwealth," M.F.P., Aug. 3, 1925.
⁴⁵. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 11, 1924, Dafoe to Grant Dexter.
⁴⁶. M.F.P., Jun. 11, 1924, "Canada and the Lausanne Treaty."
⁴⁷. M.F.P., Jun. 13, 1924, "The Reason for the Trouble."

could further this advance in constitutional development. It had long been agreed by Canadian and American officials that some control over the halibut fisheries off the North Pacific coast of the continent was needed. It was decided to negotiate a treaty which would provide for a closed season during the winter months.⁴⁸

King decided that since this treaty concerned only the United States and Canada it afforded a good opportunity for Canada to venture forth on her own into the world of treaty-making. The Canadian delegate must have the right to sign the treaty alone, without the counter-signature of the British Ambassador. The Canadian Government requested of the British Government that the title of the Treaty should indicate that it would be a convention between Canada and the United States instead of between Great Britain and the United States. The British Government offered the compromise title of "Convention for the regulation of the halibut fisheries on the Pacific Coast of Canada and the United States," which was accepted on February 27, 1923.⁴⁹ On that day the correspondence began between Washington, Ottawa and London, which was eventually to give Hon. Ernest Lapointe the right to sign the treaty alone for Canada,⁵⁰ despite the serious objections of Sir Auckland Geddes, the British Ambassador at Washington. On March 2,⁵¹ Lapointe put his signature on the Treaty.

48. C.A.R., 1923, pp. 51-2.

49. Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, II, p. 138.

50. For a complete record of the correspondence see Canada, Sessional Papers, 1923, No. 111A.

51. Although this action was to shock the Empire, it was actually not wholly unprecedented. As early as 1912, at the Radiotelegraph Conference, and at the Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea in 1914, the Dominions had signed separately for the King in respect of those

The Canadian victory was short lived. Before the Treaty left the United States Senate on March 4, it was amended so as to apply not only to Canadians, but also to "the nationals and inhabitants and vessels and boats of any other part of Great Britain."⁵² The Treaty was no longer solely a Canadian affair, but became one of Imperial concern and would have to be ratified by the parliaments of the Empire before it was effective. Mackenzie King's objections to this development manifested themselves in the form of a compromise solution offered by Canada which eliminated the need for binding the entire Empire in a treaty. After a year of negotiations the United States accepted the Canadian suggestion,⁵³ and withdrew the Senate's amendment.

Dafoe foresaw this new constitutional development^{during} the summer of 1922. When King was in Washington trying to get the Rush-Bagot agreement confirmed in the permanent form of an international treaty Dafoe wrote; "The answer to this is simple enough. Canada now proposes to control not only her domestic affairs but also her international affairs; and this implies that she should negotiate all international matters affecting herself."⁵⁴ Nevertheless in the case of the Halibut Treaty the idea of Canada controlling her own international affairs was not the only issue. There was a great deal of complaint from centralist sources suggesting that Canada was trying

Dominions, while the British representative signed on behalf of the United Kingdom and the Empire. Debates, (HC) 1923, p. 4464; see also Dawson, Dominion Status, pp. 7-8.

52. Quoted in the C.A.R., 1923, p. 53.

53. C.A.R., 1924-25, p. 79; see also Toynbee, British Empire Foreign Relations, p. 103.

54. M.F.P., Jul. 20, 1922, "Canada and International Treaties."

to cause the disintegration of the Empire. Now the deed was done and could not be stopped. At this point discussion centred around the question of whether or not Canada did sign a treaty on her own or whether she merely signed a treaty as the representative of the British Empire.

Sir Robert Borden did not believe that these events were much of a constitutional landmark. Full powers had been issued to Dominion plenipotentiaries in the past, notably at Paris in 1919.⁵⁵ The centralists had a stronger argument in trying to soft-pedal the constitutional developments involved here. They claimed that this act did not break up the unity of the Empire because at all stages of the negotiations the advice to His Majesty went through the British Government. In this they were not too successful, for the legal advisers of the British Government itself stated that, in fact, the British Government was nothing more than a channel of transmission between the Canadian Government and His Majesty.⁵⁶ Sir Clifford Sifton did not consider the Government action of any great significance either. He wrote to Dafoe that:

The facts are that the Canadian Government asked to have Lapointe commissioned by the British Government to sign the Treaty. . . . He signed it under a commission from the King issued on the advice of the British Government. It is therefore a slight step in constitutional growth, but very slight, and the final step will not be taken. . . until the King issues his commission to a Canadian Minister on the advice of the Canadian Ministers without the intervention of the British Government./57

Dafoe accepted this opinion and thus, at the outset, gave assis-

55. Borden, Canada in the Commonwealth, pp. 124-5.

56. W.K. Hancock, Commonwealth Affairs, I, p. 253.

57. Dafoe Papers, Mar. 14, 1923, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

tance to the centralist publicists.

The procedure at Washington [he wrote] in the case of the fisheries treaty marks a further advance. . . . But Mr. Lapointe, it is to be noted, acted under the authority of the British Government; he was vested by the King with the powers of a plenipotentiary on the advice of his British Ministers who in turn acted upon a recommendation by the Canadian government, . . . The procedure is paralleled with that foreshadowed for the appointment of a Canadian Minister at Washington; he will be commissioned for Canada by the British Foreign Office. In both cases the British Ambassador is eliminated, but the Canadian representative is, again in both cases, the nominee technically of the British Government and subject, theoretically, to its control. The development is therefore interesting but it falls far short of an exercise by Canada of powers of nationhood; the status of subordination is clearly recognized by the procedure. When Canada is a nation the King will appoint Canadian ministers and plenipotentiaries upon the advice of his Canadian Ministers./58

Nevertheless, Dafoe considered the "advance" of more importance than did Sir Clifford. Its importance lay in the fact that the precedent was established whereby "Canada in the negotiation or completion of a treaty affecting only Canadian interests is entitled to demand from the British Government the necessary authorization enabling her to carry out the transaction." This represented "a considerable step forward."⁵⁹ From here he began to move more in the direction of the opinions voiced by King.

After discussing the matter with the Prime Minister, Dafoe learned that the official view was far different from his own regarding the channels of transmission of advice to the Crown. "He [King] is inclined to take the view that the King appointed Lapointe on the advice of his Canadian Ministers,

58. M.F.P., Mar. 22, 1923, "Canada and the Fisheries Treaty."

59. M.F.P., Mar. 29, 1923, "Establishing a Precedent."

the Colonial Office's functions being purely mechanical and that the treaty is between Canada and the United States."⁶⁰ Still, at that time, he refused to accept this view himself. After a study of the documents involved, he continued to maintain that Lapointe was not the representative of Canada, but of the British Empire, as he was appointed by the advice of the British Government. Dafoe later noted another important advance towards national autonomy. This was the two instances of "unanimous action of parliament. . . in the definition of Canada's rights and powers as an international body."⁶¹ Here he was referring to the Parliamentary legislation in closing Canadian ports to any vessels engaging in out-of-season halibut fishing. This action in itself constituted an act of extra-territorial legislation, for it virtually had the effect of stopping vessels of external registry from fishing outside the territorial waters of Canada.⁶²

At this point he began to change his earlier opinions on the matter of advising the King. His new opinions were based on Mackenzie King's arguments in Parliament. These were not opposed by Meighen, and followed a simple and logical pattern. First, the King, in this event, exercised his diplomatic powers for Canada alone. Did he act on the advice of his Canadian or his British Ministers? When Mackenzie King stated that the advice was that of his Canadian Ministers using the British Government as the intermediary, he developed this further and stated that since the British Government passed

60. Dafoe Papers, Mar. 30, 1923, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

61. M.F.P., Jul. 10, 1923, "Parliament and the Fisheries Treaty."

62. M.F.P., Jul. 20, 1923, "Canada Claims Extra-Territorial Powers."

on the recommendation, it must have approved it. It was, therefore, actually the advice of his Canadian Ministers upon which the King acted. That was why the Treaty bound only Canada and no other part of the Empire. Meighen denied none of these arguments. And these arguments, Dafoe believed, dealt the death blow to the centralist case. "If it be accepted that these things have been definitely achieved it can be said that mighty little is left of the elaborate neo-Imperialism, concocted. . . at the last Imperial Conference."⁶³

The arguments which were aroused on Canada's right to act in this manner drew stronger replies from him after this point. In order to regularize the matter Canadian status itself would have to be regularized. The question which would have to be answered in order to solve this problem was again that of Dominion equality of status. "Surely," he insisted, "if Canada is a 'full-grown nation,' she can make a treaty with her nearest neighbor upon a matter which cannot possibly affect any other country in the world! If our status within the Commonwealth is that of Great Britain, how is it that we cannot make treaties affecting our interests when Great Britain makes treaties affecting her interests?"⁶⁴ "It is to the credit of the Canadian government that they have vindicated the power of this country to make its own treaties against the attempt of the United States senate to deny this right."⁶⁵

He considered this last point of major importance. With the possible exception of the case of the Washington Conference

63. M.F.P., Jul. 17, 1923, "Canada's Treaty-Making Powers."

64. M.F.P., Aug. 24, 1923, "The New Imperial Problem."

65. M.F.P., Dec. 21, 1923, "Canada's Treaty-Making Powers."

(and that exception had never been positively proven), the United States had never consented to recognize the new status of the British Dominions. Such was the effect of the Senate reservation to the Halibut Treaty. Therefore, the eventual ratification of the Treaty in its original form by the Senate was the equivalent of a "recognition by the United States that Canada -- and therefore the other Dominions as well -- is itself an international person."⁶⁶ This, in itself, was an important victory. Also, what Dafoe considered to be the most important point in the whole controversy was, that by the exchange of ratifications at Washington concluding the negotiations, according to the policies laid down at the Imperial Conference of 1923, there was established a precedent "of momentous importance. It was a definite act of Canadian sovereignty in the world of external affairs."⁶⁷

iv. The Imperial Conference of 1923

This Conference has already been referred to several times. It was to be the final event of major importance in the period being dealt with in this chapter. At this Conference the treaty-making powers of the Dominions were discussed and regularized, bringing about, not the destruction of the Empire as the centralists claimed it would, but rather, more flexibility and therefore a disentanglement of the problems of Imperial foreign relations.

That the need was obvious needs no further proof than the difficulties which arose over the two last mentioned discords in Imperial relations. The people of Canada were

66. M.F.P., Jun. 5, 1924, "U.S. Ratifies the Halibut Treaty."

67. M.F.P., Oct. 23, 1924, "A Constitutional Landmark."

divided into three separate classifications insofar as external affairs were concerned. There were the out and out isolationists, the Imperial co-operationists, who advocated the diplomatic unity of the Empire, and those who believed that each part of the Empire must be free to go its own way in foreign affairs which concerned itself only, and co-operate with any other part of the Empire in mattersⁱⁿ which they were jointly concerned.⁶⁸ Until one distinct path would be indicated, along which all parts of the Empire could travel in agreement, there could be no definite Imperial foreign policy or separate foreign policy for any individual part of the Empire without internal discord.

At the time in question the Canadian Government favoured the third course. Dafoe's was probably the strongest voice in the country to advocate that same course. He was certain that should the co-operationist view be accepted the Empire would soon disintegrate. He explained his own stand to Sir Robert Borden in this manner:

. . . I am thoroughly convinced that no solution which leaves Canada either a colony or the province of a centralized empire will be acceptable even to Canadians of this generation, to say nothing of the future. . . . Canadians will insist upon the status of nationhood; if there is to be Imperial unity it must be adjusted to this governing fact.

I am entirely of the opinion that there can be a moral unity of the Commonwealth which will insure common action on all occasions when this is necessary./69

Continuing, he said that should a central foreign policy be adopted and a central Foreign Office established with each

68. H. Noel Fieldhouse, "Canada's Foreign Policy," Fortnightly, No. 871, Jul., 1939, pp. 1-12.

69. Dafoe Papers, Jan. 24, 1923, Dafoe to Sir Robert Borden.

part of the Empire assuming joint responsibilities, it would be "challenged and denied by the Canadian people the moment an attempt is made to involve them in a war which they consider no affair of theirs. . . . The result would be a terrific shock to the real ties which bind Canada and Great Britain together." Yet, the British Government should not be obliged to consult Canada about her many interests in foreign affairs. Canada was "not competent" to express an opinion on most of them. Therefore there should be no limitation upon either in deciding each question "upon what might seem to them its merits." He believed that the only solution to this problem was "a frank recognition that each British nation must look after its own foreign policy." This would involve "the development of Canada to the status of actual nationhood. . . on the basis of equality with Great Britain." Then the executive government in Canada would be vested in the King "advised by his Canadian Ministers." This opinion was not altogether recent, and as early as February, 1921, he had written that "Canadians are subject to no treaty to which they do not give their consent."⁷⁰

Throughout this period it became apparent to the Prime Minister that the newspaper with the policy closest to his own, where the external and constitutional affairs of Canada were concerned, was the Free Press. That he was prepared to trust Dafoe's judgement in these matters is obvious from the fact that he took him into his confidence with regard to the intentions of the Government on the Lausanne Treaty a full year

70. M.F.P., Feb. 22, 1921, "Canada and Treaties."

before the matter became public. For that same reason he wanted Dafoe to be present at the Imperial Conference and to report the developments of that meeting. He wrote to Sir Clifford Sifton:

It would be a great misfortune were Canada's position at the Conferences to be distorted in any particular. . . . it seems to me that, unless our position is made very clear to both the British and Canadian public, consequences may be more far-reaching and serious than many at present imagine.

Having this thought in mind, I have felt that I should write and ask whether you have considered the advisability and desirability of having some representative of the Manitoba Free Press present in London during the time of the Conference, and in this particular my thoughts have naturally turned to Mr. Dafoe himself./71

This letter was forwarded to Dafoe and he accepted the suggestion. There are grounds for believing that he went to the Conference, not only to report the news, but also because he had little faith in King's abilities, and thought that it might be better if someone were on hand to keep watch over him and make certain that the gains of the last few years were not lost.

The danger in the situation is [he wrote] that those taking part in the coming Conference may consent to the question of status being left in suspension while they discuss policies which may qualify or destroy the present status of the Dominions. . . . I must say that I have very little confidence in King. I am afraid his conceit in his ability to take care of himself is equalled only by his ignorance and I should not be surprised if he should find himself trapped./72

Dafoe was clear in his own mind as to what position King should take at the Conference. He should first submit a resolution

71. Dafoe Papers, Aug. 17, 1923, W.L.M. King to Sir Clifford Sifton.

72. Dafoe Papers, Sept. 12, 1923, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

embodying the principle of equality of status.

He should take the position stoutly that he is not prepared to discuss policies or machinery till the question of our constitutional position is definitely cleared up. . . . If there should be an attempt by the other members of the Conference to stall on this point, he could declare that this resolution [of equality] embodied the policy of Canada and that his attitude towards all other questions committed must be subject to the implications of his declaration. . . . King will certainly need all the help he can get if he is to be saved from pitfalls which will be carefully and specially dug for him./73

Before leaving for London Dafoe wrote one last editorial which indicated what problems the Imperial Conference would have to face. Canada was a nation and yet she was not a nation. She was a sovereign power in the League, and yet not sovereign, in that she could not amend her own constitution. She had an international identity, indicated by her signing the Halibut Treaty, and yet had no international identity in that she must conduct her foreign affairs through the British Ministry.

. . . there is nothing alarming in the fact that we have arrived at this condition; it is natural national progress; but with the definite recognition of the anomalies of the country's status, the continuation of the natural progress requires the question of status to be elucidated and the anomalies removed; that is something that might as well be admitted, because it is inherent in the development of Canada./74

This Conference was to accomplish what the Conference of 1921 tried to do and failed. It solved the problem of Dominion participation in foreign affairs. That Dafoe was

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73. Ibid.; the author has not seen Dafoe's personal diaries kept at the Conference, and therefore cannot indicate what he thought privately of Mr. King's accomplishments there. The only records available at present of his impressions in London are his dispatches to the Free Press and statements made and editorials written after his return.
74. M.F.P., Sept. 29, 1923, "The Problems of the Imperial Conference."

right in his interpretation of how this was to be done is plainly seen in that the other method, the idea of diplomatic unity of the Empire, was tried in 1921, and it broke down completely with the Chanak fiasco. As a result this problem consumed most of the time of the Conference and it is the only aspect of its work with which we are interested here.

When the Conference met it was found that Australia and New Zealand still favoured Dominion responsibility in Imperial foreign affairs "by virtue of the supposed right of consultation." Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State demurred on the ground that no Dominion could be committed to Imperial foreign affairs "unless by action of its own parliament."⁷⁵ As the Conference progressed, King, in defence of his own policies in the form of the precedent of the Halibut Treaty insisted on the right of Canada "to attend to her own external affairs thereby developing a foreign policy of her own. He disclaimed any desire that Canada instruct or advise Great Britain in her particular foreign affairs, while agreeing that in large questions of common concern consultation and communication were desirable."⁷⁶ Thus, with the exception of holding out for a declaration of equality of status King was following the policies outlined by Dafoe before their departure from Canada. Dafoe, himself, predicted that the chief value of the Conference would be "to demonstrate that the interests of the various countries are so diverse that comment and action on most questions is not practicable or desirable."⁷⁷ He also

75. J.W. Dafoe, "Canada at the Imperial Conference," M.F.P., Oct. 10, 1923.

76. Dafoe, "Imperial Conference," M.F.P., Oct. 13, 1923.

77. Dafoe, "Imperial Conference," M.F.P., Oct. 24, 1923.

foresaw that the right of the Dominions to make their own political treaties would be confirmed, which would amount to diplomatic independence for the Dominions, and would also mean that the Dominions had the right to attend to their own foreign affairs. "The prospects, therefore, are bright, this conference will mark a very substantial advance in the transformation of the empire [sic] into an alliance of ^[sic] a community of British nations."⁷⁸

Dafoe's predictions were not unfounded. That the Conference accepted the view of the Canadian Government regarding its attitude to the Lausanne Treaty is seen in the following extract from the report: "This Conference is a conference of representatives of the several Governments of the Empire; its views and conclusions on Foreign Policy, as recorded above, are necessarily subject to the action of the Governments and Parliaments of the various portions of the Empire, and it trusts that the results of its deliberations will meet with their approval."⁷⁹ In addition to acknowledging the right of the Canadian Government not to consider itself bound by the Lausanne Treaty, this declaration had another significance of major importance. By the very construction of its words, it stripped the Imperial Conference of any vestiges of power, which some of the members might have thought it had retained, and in that way gave the coup de grace to any future ideas of an Imperial Cabinet. By means of her actions in relation to the Chanak incident, Canada had repudiated the theory of an Imperial Cabinet's control over an Imperial foreign policy. At the Conference she

78. Dafoe, "Imperial Conference," M.F.P., Oct. 30, 1923.

79. Canada, Sessional Papers, 1923, No. 37, p. 12.

had led the way for an Imperial repudiation of that same theory.

That the Conference accepted the precedent set by the Canadian Government in its negotiation of the Halibut Treaty is evident in its decision on a new procedure for the negotiation, signature and ratification of treaties. The Dominions now had full treaty-making rights independent of Great Britain, but all parts of the Empire were to be kept informed of any negotiations and each was permitted to express its views or participate if it so wished; and at international conferences the British Empire representation would be such as was instituted at Paris and Washington.⁸⁰ Another very important advance in status which was gained by the Dominions was the right of advising the Crown. This gain was secured primarily as a result of the precedents set by the Dominions at the Paris and Washington conferences and with Canada's action in regard to the Halibut Treaty.⁸¹

Dafoe later admitted only to the part of an observer and commentator on the events which occurred at the Conference. It is to be presumed that he took a larger, albeit an unofficial part. "It is a mercy that King had you Skelton, and Coates with him," wrote John S. Ewart.⁸² Nevertheless Dafoe gave full credit for the advances made "to the Canadian dele-

80. Ibid., pp. 12-14.

81. Dafoe, "Imperial Conference," M.F.P., Nov. 8, 1923.

82. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 27, 1923, J.S. Ewart to Dafoe. The true part played by Dafoe at this conference cannot be known until his diary of the event is made available. Mr. King's papers are still in the process of classification, and unfortunately, Mr. Skelton's papers have been lost in a fire in the home of his son, the late Alexander Skelton, near Ottawa, a few years ago.

gation and principally to Mr. King" who, after he had made his views known, as a rule received a considerable amount of support from the South African delegation.⁸³

From that time on he was of the opinion that those who suggested that a treaty made by Great Britain was binding on all parts of the Empire were negating the principle of equality of status with the nations of the Empire. Neither would this apply if the King's name was used in the treaty. That was evident from the fact that the Halibut Treaty was a convention between His Majesty and the United States, and yet bound only Canada.⁸⁴ He devoted a considerable amount of space during the first few months after the Conference to keeping the gains secured there before the public eye. In this manner he hoped to influence as large a proportion of the people as was possible towards unhesitatingly accepting the new situation in Imperial affairs. This would help them to accept the additional changes which he knew must be forthcoming in future years. The affairs of the Dominions had not yet been "regularized." There still had been no statement issued on the equality of the various parts of the Empire, and Dafoe did not intend to relax his campaign for such a declaration until it was issued. He disagreed with Meighen's statement that a constitutional conference was unnecessary. He agreed that it would be impossible to frame a constitution for the Empire, for that would merely turn the Empire into a unified state, a plan which had already been "passed into the discard." He maintained that a constitutional conference should be called for the purpose of

83. Dafoe, "Imperial Conference," M.F.P., Nove. 28, 1923.

84. M.F.P., Aug. 30, 1924, "Treaty-Making Powers."

passing a "formal declaration to regularize within the Empire itself and in the face of the world, the relationship which already exists, for the quieting of doubts at home and for the instruction of the outside world as well."⁸⁵

Thus, while in the case of the Halibut Treaty Canada exercised the right to make a treaty by herself, upon a purely Canadian question, about the same time, in the matter of the Treaty of Lausanne she "exercised her right to stay outside the scope of a treaty made by another British nation on the ground that the matters dealt with by it are not of sufficient concern to call for participation by Canada."⁸⁶ "By the Imperial Conference of 1923, it will be seen that out of the confusion has come a fairly definite policy which has a significant bearing upon the question of imperial relations." "The scheme thus adopted is flexible and adaptable."⁸⁷

v. The London Reparations Conference

It remained only to have the results of the Conference put to a test in order to confirm their effectiveness. The test came when the invitations to the London Reparations Conference were issued. The Conference was called to meet during July and August of 1924. Following the method of the Lausanne Conference Great Britain snubbed the Dominions by facing them with a fait accompli as to Empire representation. The British Government informed Mackenzie King that it would not be possible for more than three representatives of the British Empire to be present, and inferred that these representatives would be chosen by the British Government.⁸⁸

85. M.F.P., Oct. 2, 1924, "Mr. Meighen on Empire Relations."

86. M.F.P., Apr. 4, 1924, "Canada and the Lausanne Treaty."

87. Dafoe, "Rise of the Commonwealth," M.F.P., Aug. 3, 1925.

88. Debates, (HC) 1924, p. 4685.

King refused to accept Canadian responsibility unless established precedents were followed, and pointed out that foreign nations had no business trying to dictate the representation of the British Empire delegation. He considered that Canadian representation through the British delegates would mean a lowering of status.⁸⁹ Hence, an arrangement was arrived at whereby the Dominions participated as part of a British Empire delegation by means of a panel system; and when it was not their turn to be delegates they sat as observers so as to be constantly familiar with the proceedings. The panel also discussed daily the business of the Conference amongst themselves.⁹⁰ Mackenzie King accepted this formula as the best means of securing representation under the circumstances. But he secured a public statement from the British Government that this would not be regarded as a precedent for future representation. Dafoe agreed. "In the panel system the members of the all-British delegation do not serve in rotation. The British members are constantly in attendance and it is the Dominion representatives that rotate. As a permanent method it is quite unacceptable." He followed up this criticism with an iron-clad constitutional argument.

By the terms of the declaration as to treaty-making powers adopted at the last Imperial Conference, whenever international negotiations are afoot between any British nation and a foreign nation, any other British nation can declare itself in on the conference if it believes that its interests are affected. It follows that when a nation thus declares itself in, it goes in as a principal and not subject to the exigencies of a panel system./91

89. Ibid.

90. Toynbee, British Empire Foreign Relations, p. 93.

91. M.F.P., Oct. 2, 1924, "Mr. Meighen on Empire Relations."

Here, Canada had asserted her right, conceded by the British Government, to be represented at a conference to which she had not been invited. Canada objected to the form of representation offered and King obtained guarantees that that form would not be considered a precedent. In that way the right of the Dominions to have separate representation at such conferences was upheld, thus assuring the Dominions against further defections from the decisions of the Imperial Conference of 1923.

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When this period began the diplomatic unity of the Empire was in doubt as a result of the events which concluded with the Washington Conference. During this period precedents^{were} established which were to make changes in the relationships of the Dominions towards the United Kingdom within the Empire. The Chanak incident was used to confirm the unworkability of Dominion participation and responsibility in Imperial foreign affairs. The Lausanne and the Halibut Treaty negotiations, which were going on at practically the same time, indicated that while Canada would reject responsibility for a foreign policy in which she took no part, on the other hand it was her intention to make progress in the evolution of a distinct Canadian foreign policy carried out by herself. The decisions of the Imperial Conference were to give constitutional approval to her determination to continue in that direction. The events of the London Reparations Conference indicated a general acceptance of those policies by the British Government. In all these issues it was obvious that the Government, if it was not

following directly the suggestions of Dafoe, was at least motivated by the same ideals and aspirations which brought forth Dafoe's editorials. The similarities of his writings and of the Government's actions were too close to permit any other opinion. For that reason Mackenzie King invited him to attend the Imperial Conference to report the news to Canada. It might not be wrong to assume that the actions adopted by the Government after the Imperial Conference were greatly influenced by an interchange of opinion between Dafoe, King and Skelton whilst together in London.

CHAPTER V

THE DRIFT TOWARDS ISOLATION

By this time it appeared that Canada had attained the fullest measure of autonomy she then desired. A mood of isolation then began. The international scene was being more occupied by the problems of security and disarmament. While Great Britain was deeply concerned with these problems, Canada took little more than an intellectual interest in them, and participated only when her own interests were affected. Otherwise Canada was satisfied to let Britain go her own way in Europe.

Dafoe himself was not free from responsibility for this trend. It will be shown in this chapter how his attitude, in reference to these problems, gave comfort to those who were interested in divorcing Canada from European responsibilities. It is to be assumed that Dafoe did not intentionally aid the development of those viewpoints, but, in his defence of those actions which furthered the growth of autonomy, he was forced publicly to ignore the isolationism to which that growth was leading.

During this period the interests of the international world were centred primarily upon three different sets of negotiations, each of which, it was hoped, would provide a more peaceful atmosphere. These were the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, the Geneva Protocol and the Locarno Conference and Treaties.

i. The Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance (and the Reparation Problem)

The purpose of the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance

which was proposed for the first time in the Third Assembly of the League, was to provide the necessary guarantees which would enable reductions in national armaments. It declared that parties to the Treaty would provide assistance to any other signatory on their continent, provided that it had conformed to the disarmament provisions of the Treaty.¹ One of the main reasons for the failure of this attempt was the unanimous objection to it by all parts of the British Empire. From an Imperial point of view the major reason for its rejection was that it involved the entire world and, therefore, brought to the Empire world-wide obligations which were tighter than those imposed by the League. In fact, the British Government, after consulting with the Dominions, found that the Draft Treaty would mean to them an increase in armaments rather than a decrease.²

Dafoe himself paid very little attention to this treaty either from the standpoint of Canadian obligations of European security. That is not to say that he was not interested in European security. He was, but he was of the opinion that the problem of German reparations was the important one to be resolved before European security could be assured. He felt that European peace was being endangered because France sought to establish "a French overlordship, in both a military and business sense, of Europe."³

Shortly thereafter he wrote that "the adoption of the reparations committee report by all the governments concerned [did] give something more than a reasonable assurance that the

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1. Carter: British Commonwealth and Security, p. 110.
 2. Toynbee: Survey, 1924, pp. 30-2.
 3. M.F.P.: "France and Security," Mar. 31, 1924.

road to a settlement [had] been found."⁴ His attitude was that European security was endangered primarily because of the falling out between Britain and France brought about by the French invasion of the Ruhr; therefore, the condition on which the settlement of Europe really depended was that of a satisfactory working agreement between France and Great Britain.⁵ These opinions were reinforced after the London⁶ Reparations Conference.

~~During~~^{In} none of his known comments on the need for a European settlement did he make mention of Canadian obligations to help in that direction. That was a European problem and therefore a European responsibility. Commenting on British apprehension over the large French armaments, he agreed that some sort of a guarantee should be given to France to assist her in disarming, but confined his suggestion to that of a European guarantee. "A European arrangement which would afford a system of mutual guarantees over the whole continent, and relieve any nation from taking extraordinary precautions for its own safety is the only thing which would remove such a menace to British security. . . ."⁷

ii. The Geneva Protocol

The Geneva Protocol was the system suggested by the Macdonald Government of Great Britain for the solution of the European security problem. The British Government felt responsible for the rejection of the Draft Treaty and, in order to save face, proposed the Protocol. One of the main advan-

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- 4. M.F.P.: Apr. 18, 1924, "France and the Reparations Findings."
 - 5. M.F.P.: Apr. 26, 1924, "Policy and Reparations."
 - 6. M.F.P.: Aug. 19, 1924, "The Story of Reparations."
 - 7. M.F.P.: Mar. 5, 1924, "French Securities."

tages of this document was that it defined the "aggressor", and in that way simplified the matter of what country would be charged with the responsibility for a breach of the peace. This proved to be an advancement on the Covenant of the League of Nations. "It therefore followed the Covenant in providing for material sanctions against the aggressor and for assistance to the party attacked or threatened; . . . " ⁸ Thus, the Protocol provided for compulsory arbitration and compulsory ⁹ settlement of international disputes.

A Japanese amendment to the Protocol, however, put a new interpretation into the question of how to determine ¹⁰ aggression. The effect of this amendment, it was feared in Canada and in other countries vexed by Oriental immigration problems, would be to give Japan the right to attack them using their immigration policy as a causus belli, without being named an aggressor. Whatever other objections the British Empire might have had to the Protocol, this amendment by itself meant that Canada could not accept the plan.

Dafoe insisted that, no matter what the League might think, immigration was a domestic matter, and did not concern the League. He therefore opposed acceptance of the Protocol

8. Toynbee: Survey, 1924, pp. 49-50.

9. For further details on the operation of the Protocol see; MacKay and Rogers: Canada Abroad, pp. 99 ff.; A.G. Dewey: Dominions and Diplomacy, II, pp. 202 ff; C.A.R., 1924-25, pp. 35-36, C.A.R., 1925-26, pp. 118-21.

10. "The Japanese delegation proposed that, even when a dispute had been declared a matter of domestic jurisdiction under Article 15, paragraph 8, of the Covenant, the Council should still have the duty of trying to remove any danger to peace that might have arisen out of the situation. The Japanese delegation declared that, unless some such provision were made, it could not agree to a State party to a dispute being presumed the aggressor simply because it became involved in hostilities after the question at issue had been declared

thus amended.¹¹ He also stressed the danger of accepting that view because it would forever keep the United States out of the League.¹² About the same time reports began to arrive in Canada from Geneva that Senator Dandurand had been speaking favourably of the Protocol. Sir Clifford Sifton wrote to Dafoe: "I see Dandurand giving interviews to the effect that Canada will ratify it. I differ with him and I think it would be a friendly act to the Government for you to take a decisive stand and give them warning."¹³ The advice was unnecessary; Dafoe had already begun his campaign. He replied to Sifton stating his opinion;

Re the peace protocol of the League of Nations, . . . my view is practically identical with yours. I should think that the chances of the British Parliament ratifying the protocol in its present form are slight, if the effect of the amendment is as it seems to be; that a question held by the international world court to be purely domestic can be made the subject for consideration by the Council of the League upon the action of some outside country which finds, or pretends to find, a cause of offence in the domestic act of some other country. One of the most unfortunate phases of the development is the effect it is having upon the United States public opinion. It has seemed to me. . . that some progress was being made towards converting the American people to believe that they should belong to the League of Nations; but this action taken by the League at the instance of Japan is likely to undo all the good that has been done. . . . If Great Britain

to be within the jurisdiction of the other party. It was accordingly decided that the Council or the Assembly, under Article II of the Covenant, were always competent to deal with any threats to peace (under this Article, the votes of the parties to a dispute are counted in reaching unanimity) and to attempt to effect conciliation between the parties; a State party to a dispute should be presumed the aggressor if hostilities broke out only in case it had not appealed to the League under Article II after the substance of the dispute had been declared to be within the jurisdiction of the other party." League of Nations: Ten Years of World Co-operation, (Geneva, 1930) p. 74, note.

11. M.F.P., Oct. 1, 1924, "Japan's Protest."

12. Ibid.

13. Dafoe Papers, Oct. 3, 1924, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

should be favorable to the protocol and the Dominions should decline, there might be serious consequences, one of which might be that they might be obliged, under the pressure of events, to look for leadership and protection not to Great Britain but to the United States./14

The first editorial criticizing the Protocol appeared in the Free Press on October 4, 1924.¹⁵ In it Dafoe dealt with the differences between the Protocol and the Covenant of the League, indicating that whereas the Covenant would not grant the League power to interfere in the domestic affairs of a nation the effect of the Protocol would be to give the League just that power. Sifton commended him.

Your article is entirely correct. In fact it was the only article written in Canada that showed complete understanding of the situation. . . . No newspaper in Canada except perhaps the Free Press has shown an appreciation of this point. . . . The newspapers have maintained that the Protocol was harmless and dependent upon the former provision [clause of Article 10 of the Protocol], but the former provision is in effect repealed by the statement that the matter may be taken up notwithstanding the judgement of the World Court./16

Dafoe later predicted that the Protocol would fail, and blamed this eventual failure directly on "the result of the amendment to it insisted upon by Japan and agreed to by the Assembly of the League of Nations." This problem he did not consider too serious; the Covenant of the League of Nations would still remain, aiming towards the same general goals.¹⁷ Neither did he in his criticisms forget the other protests of the British nations to the Protocol. He saw that if it was approved the British fleet would most likely be at the disposal of the League for punitive and blockade purposes. Further-

14. Ibid.

15. M.F.P., Oct. 4, 1924, "The League on Dangerous Ground."

16. Dafoe Papers, Oct. 14, 1924, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

17. M.F.P., Nov. 21, 1924, "The Peace Protocol in Danger."

more, "with the United States outside the League and extremely touchy upon the question of the rights of neutrals at sea, it might happen that the British navy, under League orders, might come into conflict with the United States. This is regarded¹⁸ as something that must not be allowed to happen." He also expressed the opinion that the Protocol seemed to be the work of a league of victorious nations. He suggested that when Germany entered the League there would have to be some revision of some of the parts of the Treaty of Versailles, which the Protocol was meant to forestall.¹⁹ When the British Government proposed an Imperial Conference to discuss the attitude the Empire should take in relation to the Protocol, Dafoe objected, coupling his objection with a serious criticism of the Imperial Conference system itself.²⁰ When the suggestion was turned down by the Dominions he expressed the opinion that there was, from that time on, no doubt in his mind that the Dominions²¹ would reject the Protocol.

After the official rejection of the Protocol by the Canadian Government,²² Dafoe reviewed Canadian and his own opinions of the document. He noted that:

The attitude of Canada is that it is not prepared to accept any liabilities or obligations beyond those implied by our adhesion to the Covenant of the League of Nations. With the modification of the obligations under Article Ten, provided for by the interpretation secured by the Assembly in 1923 (only Persia dissenting), this country is in a position where it is pretty safe from European entanglements. It is always open

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18. M.F.P., Dec. 10, 1924, "The British Nations and the Peace Protocol."
 19. M.F.P., Feb. 24, 1925, "British Criticisms of the Protocol."
 20. M.F.P., Dec. 26, 1924, "Objections to the Conference System." see also below, pp. 131-3.
 21. M.F.P., Jan. 19, 1925, "The Dominions and the Peace Protocol."
 22. Official message dated Mar. 10, 1925; League of Nations: Papers on Arbitration, Security and Reduction of Armaments, A.25, 1925. IX, Geneva, Jun. 25, 1925.

to the Canadian people and their Parliament to take part in European wars if moral justification for intervention exists; and the past is the guarantee that if the necessity arises Canada will do her duty. But this country is not prepared to have its right to control its own decisions further limited by such devices as the automatic sanctions and the right to review domestic decisions contained in the protocol./23

In the light of the fact that Canada succeeded in limiting her obligations towards European wars by her action on Article X in 1923, he saw the proposal of the Protocol, just one year later, to be an attempt to swing "the pendulum in the other direction." On this he remarked: "We think the Governments of the British nations amply justified in taking an attitude of critical reserve pending a complete examination of the innovation and an appraisalment of its contingent obligations. . . . We say that Canada has the right to take time to make very sure that she is not being involved in commitments to assist in perpetuating wrongs in Europe."²⁴ The Free Press, he claimed, was neither an advocate nor an opponent of the Protocol. "Its position is that of the interested British and Canadian public generally."²⁵ Yet, he felt that rejection of the Protocol did no harm. He wrote shortly thereafter: "The refusal of the British nations to accept the protocol has had as yet none of the horrendous consequences prophesied. The League of Nations shows every sign of surviving with, if anything, an expansion of activities."²⁶

Dafoe's opinions were not ignored in Ottawa circles. His editorials were read there and were appreciated. After the

23. M.F.P., Mar. 17, 1925, "Canada and European Security."

24. M.F.P., Feb. 28, 1925, "Europe, Canada and the Protocol."

25. Ibid.

26. M.F.P., Apr. 8, 1925, "Canada's Constructive Proposals."

affair was closed, O.D. Skelton, Deputy Minister of External Affairs, wrote to him: "I have been very much interested in your editorials on the Protocol. They seem to me very penetrating and very sound."²⁷

Dafoe's opinions did not change over the next two years at least. In an address to the Winnipeg Branch of the League of Nations Society he discussed the Protocol in the same terms with which he referred to it two years earlier. He claimed that "it transformed the whole spirit of the League" by replacing the methods of "voluntary co-operation" with "compulsory arbitration and enforced judgements, which proved to be much more popular with European militarists intent on preserving the spoils of victory intact than with liberals who look forward to a world which is free of war because it is the will of its peoples that it shall be so."²⁸

iii. The Locarno Treaty

By indicating a preference for isolation from international commitments with regard to the Draft Treaty and the Geneva Protocol, Canada showed no change in her external relations. These acts were consistent with the attitude she previously had taken with regard to Article X of the Covenant and the Lausanne Treaty. The extent of Canadian isolation to that time, however, was difficult to measure. It was true that Canada had rejected two successive plans designed to relieve world tensions, but Great Britain had also rejected them, using similar reasons at both times. It was not until after the Locarno Treaty was signed and ratified by Great Britain that

27. Dafoe Papers, Mar. 17, 1925, O.D. Skelton to Dafoe.

28. J.W. Dafoe, address to the Winnipeg Branch, League of Nations Society, Apr. 19, 1927.

the world could be certain of Canada's isolation from European affairs -- an isolation that was to last until the advent of Hitler's War. In this last case ^(Locarno) Canada had refused to accept an arrangement which was found to be necessary by Great Britain and by the rest of Europe to preserve the peace.

When it was seen that the Geneva Protocol would not be successful, the attempt to seal the gap in European security had to begin again. The last two arrangements had been proposed through the League of Nations. The next attempt was to be framed on an organization independent of the League. This was evident in the spring of 1925 when O.D. Skelton wrote to Dafoe, "From present appearances the centre of interest is shifting from Geneva to Paris, and for some months to come the Anglo-French-Belgian-German Pact will hold the limelight."²⁹

The idea for a pact of that nature was not new. It had been proposed by Dr. Cuno, the German Chancellor, as early as December 31, 1922, and was repeated twice during the next nine months, but was each time rejected by France.³⁰ At the end of 1924 the British Ambassador at Berlin suggested that the offer be made again, giving as his reason that in the light of extant conditions the proposal stood a more likely chance of acceptance.³¹

About the same time the problem of the direction which British Empire foreign policy was to take in the future began again to arise. By this time views similar to those expounded by Dafoe began to take root in certain circles in Great Britain. A.E. Zimmern had written an article in which he declared that Imperial unity would not suffer if the Dominions handled their

29. Dafoe Papers, Mar. 24, 1925, O.D. Skelton to Dafoe.

30. Toynbee, Survey, 1925, II, pp. 15 ff.

31. Ibid.

own foreign affairs. He argued that it was impossible to expect five different nations in four different continents at different stages of economic and social development to have common policies. Therefore, it was desirable for them to agree where they had common interests, and to differ over the special issues on which they could not agree.³² Dafoe commented on this article, stressing the need for a recognition of the fact that the Dominions had interests which might differ from those of Great Britain. "That is to say," he wrote, "the Dominions have been carrying out their foreign policies by indirection or under disguise for a long time past; the new developments will simply recognize and regularize an existing practice."³³

With public opinion shifting in that direction, and considering the former actions of the Dominions, particularly of Canada, in regard to European commitments, it was not surprising that when the Locarno pact was drawn up it included an article which exempted the British Dominions from any obligations.³⁴ It was finally decided that Great Britain and the Dominions must act separately on international matters in which all could not accept equal responsibilities. This action was not wholly unprecedented. Dominion exemption clauses had been in extensive use in commercial treaties for more than fifty years. The Tripartite Treaty of Guarantee of June 28, 1919 and the draft treaties submitted by Lloyd George and Briand at Cannes on

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32. A.E. Zimmermann, The Nation and Athenaeum, Aug. 30, 1924, "The British Empire in 1924," p. 663. For a more complete account of Zimmermann's opinions, at this time, on the diversity of the British Empire, see, A.E. Zimmermann, The Third British Empire, 1st ed., (London, 1926) passim.
33. M.F.P., Nov. 14, 1924, "Distinct Foreign Policies."
34. Article IX of the pact read: "The present treaty shall impose no obligation upon any of the British Dominions or upon India, unless the government of such Dominion or of India, signifies its acceptance thereof."

January 12, 1922, had contained such clauses. Also, Ernest Lapointe, in the Canadian Parliament, had urged similar action with regard to Canada in any treaty replacing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.³⁵

Dafoe stated that the exemption clause made "matchwood of the theory that the Empire. . . must have a uniform policy on all questions, to which all parts must adhere."³⁶ He agreed with the motives behind the declaration of the Canadian Government that it did not intend to ask Parliament to accept the pact. Great Britain was prepared to accept such an obligation because she was so vitally interested in European stability; Canada was not equally interested and therefore did not assume the obligation. Here was an example of an occasion not calling for common action; therefore Great Britain took her own line to look after her special interests. He found this system, if not "logical and symmetrical" to be "sensible and practicable",³⁷ because it worked.

In this instance Dafoe felt that he was guarding against Canadian isolation from foreign obligations. What he sought was a distinct Canadian foreign policy in which Canada would look after all external affairs in which she was interested. Regarding the Empire as a diplomatic unit, he wrote:

. . . every time an attempt is made to induce the Dominions to fall in with it, there will be an access of isolationist sentiment in the Dominions. . . . The idea that Canada, . . . can be interested in Great Britain's multifarious foreign enterprises to the extent that the people of Great Britain are, thereby assuming a proportionate responsibility, is a sheer hallucination; and the more it is flaunted

35. Debates, (HC) 1921, pp. 2639-40.

36. M.F.P., Jun. 15, 1925, "The Dominions and the Pact."

37. Ibid.

before the Canadian people the stronger will be their inclination to have nothing to do with Imperial external affairs. The Dominions ought to be encouraged to look after their own foreign affairs; but it should always be made clear to them that Great Britain will be glad to have them associated with her in her major policies if this is their desire. But there should be none of this hectoring and bullying which is going on, as for instance in the matter of Locarno. Where the Dominions -- or any particular Dominion -- do not want to come in they escape a particular obligation but, of course, are involved at least nominally in war if it should come. A policy of this sort for twenty years would probably go far towards making the Empire a diplomatic unit in everything that matters; but the policy that is persistently followed will end inevitably in separation and Dominion independence, though the end may still be some way down the road./38

In the same letter he wrote that "the wise Imperial policy [would be] to encourage direct contact between the Dominions and the outside world, thus curing us of our isolationist tendencies and teaching us to think in international terms."³⁹

Dafoe justified his personal opposition to Canadian participation in the Locarno Pact on the basis that Great Britain herself was not ardently favourable to it but was, by her geographical position, entangled in European interests and could not follow an isolationist policy.⁴⁰ In addition to that he was not very certain in his own mind that the pact was designed for peace instead of for war. That, he thought, was a representation which would "stand considerable scrutiny."⁴¹

Over a period of time he began to think better of the Locarno Pact. Dafoe had never approved completely of the Treaty of Versailles and saw the modifications which were being applied to that document by means of the Dawes Plan and

38. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 5, 1926, Dafoe to H.H. Wrong.

39. Ibid.

40. M.F.P., Jul. 15, 1925, "Great Britain and European Security."
See also M.F.P., Jul. 3, 1925, "The Security Pact."

41. M.F.P., Jul. 3, 1925, "The Security Pact."

the Locarno Pact, if its full provisions would be honoured faithfully by its signatories, as assuring the peace of Europe.⁴² He nevertheless again warned against Canada becoming a signatory; the effect of that would be to make the Rhine a Canadian frontier. While that was necessary for Great Britain, a European Power, it was not an advisable policy for Canada.⁴³

After the Treaty had been signed⁴⁴ the dispute in Canada as to whether this country should associate itself with the Treaty, had begun. The Ottawa Journal suspected that the Canadian Government would reject it and, therefore, seriously criticized King and his colleagues for their alleged indifference. In reply,⁴⁵ Dafoe suggested that it was apparent, from the tenor of Meighen's Hamilton speech,⁴⁶ that the Government were not alone in their thoughts, but that the Conservative party fully agreed with them on this issue; that is, it was opposed to committing Canada to any treaty, or agreement, or alliance that would commit her to a foreign war. Dafoe heartily approved of such a change in Conservative party policies. "This is sound nationalistic doctrine," he wrote, "very familiar to the Free Press, as it has been preaching it itself for a good many years."⁴⁷

42. M.F.P., Oct. 19, 1925, "Locarno and Peace."

43. M.F.P., Nov. 25, 1925, "The Dominions and the Pact."

44. The Treaty was signed in London on Dec. 1, 1925; League of Nations: World Co-operation, p. 77.

45. M.F.P., Jan. 26, 1926, "Adding to the List of Pikers."

46. Meighen, in Hamilton, in an attempt to gain votes in nationalistic Quebec, stated that if his party was in power at a time when war seemed imminent, preliminary preparations might be undertaken but no Canadian troops would be despatched overseas until the will of the electorate was ascertained in a general election. John A. Stevenson, "Canada and Locarno," The New Republic, vol. 46, p. 66.

47. M.F.P., Feb. 6, 1926, "Mr. Meighen's War Policy."

With regard to Canadian ratification of the Treaty, he believed that if it was the intention of any of the Contracting Powers to desire it, they should have approached the Dominions a year earlier, "in advance of the meeting at Locarno." Then, any Dominion which desired to participate could have made its decision before the conference. It would then have been able to participate there, according to the procedure with respect to foreign relations agreed upon at the Imperial Conference of 1923, "and have a voice in fixing the conditions and obligations of the treaty to which it proposed to be a party." The fact was, however, that the Dominions did not want to be at Locarno because they felt that the problems being discussed there were European problems, in which they were interested, but not directly concerned. It was just that fact which should make them decline "to accept the obligations and commitments of the Locarno treaty in the making of which they had no part."⁴⁸ When he considered European developments after the signing of the Treaty he found that they had not improved. A "spirit of intrigue, of jealousy, of double-dealing" prevailed there, and for that reason he felt that Canada could be congratulated for having assumed no special responsibility to participate in such affairs.⁴⁹

In spite of his support of the Government in its rejection of all three security measures, Dafoe continued in his editorials to insist that Canada was not taking an isolationist stand in relation to European affairs. He merely contended that Canada should not participate in European affairs if they

48. M.F.P., Feb. 18, 1926, "The Dominions and Locarno."

49. M.F.P., Mar. 19, 1926, "The Fiasco at Geneva."

were no business of hers. "Canada", he wrote, "can hardly be accused of being indifferent to the troubles of Europe, nor of maintaining an isolationist attitude towards it. Sixty thousand Canadians, buried in France because the statesmen of Europe could not keep the peace, testify to this country's readiness to intervene when the circumstances call for it." He maintained that by refusing to become a party to the Locarno Treaty Canada merely reserved the right to judge for herself on the propriety of any future European quarrel, and to decide for herself the extent of her intervention.⁵⁰ Privately, however, he did not express the same view. He clung firmly to the theory that Canada should decide for herself the extent of her participation in future European quarrels; but he did not insist on the absence of isolationism from Canadian motives. In fact, he stated in his correspondence, referring to recent developments in the matter of Imperial consultation towards uniformity in foreign policy, that isolationist tendencies⁵¹ were setting in to counteract such Imperial pressures.

Thus, it is obvious that he perceived the direction in which Canadian policy was drifting. Dafoe ascribed the drift to Imperialist pressure on Canadian policy-making. His attacks on these alleged pressures, however, prevented him from exposing the native roots of isolation. Thus he must be held to share responsibility for the growth of isolation. By not publicly stating the problem which was arising, and having the

50. M.F.P., Dec. 2, 1926, "Locarno and the Dominions."

51. Dafoe referred to an "increasingly isolationist" sentiment in retaliation to such pressures. Dafoe Papers, May 10, 1926, Dafoe to J.A. Stevenson; see also above, pp. 125-6. letter to H.H. Wrong, Apr. 5, 1926.

public face it intelligently, he committed a serious error of omission. In short, Dafoe gave indirect, though inadvertent, encouragement to those who sought complete Canadian isolation.

iv. The Autonomy Campaign During this Period

All this work was done with the ultimate goal in mind of securing complete Canadian autonomy within the Empire recognized by Great Britain. When this period began Canada had assumed full control of her own external relations and had secured the right to participate in any Empire treaty which might be to her interest. Throughout this period Dafoe concentrated on publicizing the fact that not only could Canada participate in affairs which interested her, but also that she could disassociate herself from Imperial affairs where she felt she had no interests. If this goal could be attained then the fact of Canadian autonomy would have to be conceded, and all that would remain to be done would be to secure confirmation of these developments in the form of a declaration from the Imperial Government, possibly through the auspices of a Constitutional Conference. That would be sufficient to inform the world of the new status being enjoyed by the British Dominions, a status which was already accepted by the several governments within the Empire.

Although that was all that was required, it was not forthcoming. He continued to attack the failure to take action in this regard. "The Dominions and Great Britain have systematically dodged the responsibility of regularizing the new regime in the eyes of the world." Although the decision of 1917 was to hold a Constitutional Conference after the war"

this proposal was smothered at the Imperial Conference of 1921 by Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. Hughes of Australia, with Mr. Meighen of Canada a consenting party." Those who justified this side-stepping of the problem did so with the excuse that where custom and procedure accepted a change legal documentation of the fact was not necessary. Dafoe objected. "The Free Press. . . has always been critical of the wisdom and utility of this policy of evasion and procrastination. It has said. . . that. . . it was advisable for the Commonwealth to take whatever steps were necessary, in the form of definition and proclamation, to regularize the new conditions in the face of the world."⁵² He continued to insist that regardless of any representations to the contrary by some individuals it was recognized in 1917 and 1919 "by all British parties, that Dominion equality of status is and must be the corner-stone of Imperial policy."⁵³ Until this fact was regularized there would remain anomalies which proved very confusing, especially to foreign nations, and the Dominions could never expect to receive the international recognition which was their due.

Dafoe declared that the need for such a declaration and regularization was so pressing that it would have to be resolved at the next Imperial Conference. Otherwise, he predicted, the individual British Parliaments would pass such declarations defining Imperial relations for themselves; and that step, he felt, was not advisable.⁵⁴ This, he believed, was the final use to which an Imperial Conference could be put.

52. M.F.P., Jun. 13, 1924, "The Reason for the Trouble."

53. M.F.P., Jul. 31, 1924, "Mr. Thomas Summons a Conference."

54. M.F.P., Oct. 2, 1924, "Mr. Meighen on Empire Relations."

He objected to the calling of such a conference except with the intention of finally regularizing Imperial relations. For any purpose other than that the Imperial Conference was outdated. It had become a "cumbersome", "slow" and "indecisive" body which should be continued only as a "ceremonial and social function, but as a practical agency of government. . . should be discarded."⁵⁵ To replace the Imperial Conference as a means of Imperial communication he recommended that a Commonwealth diplomatic machinery would have to be created. In suggesting that innovation Dafoe predicted the change which was shortly to come in the nature of the Governor-General's office. "Canada ought to have a diplomatic agent in London and Great Britain ought to have a similar representative in Canada, apart altogether from the Governor-General, who should cease to be an official of the British Government and become a viceroy and nothing else." If such changes were carried out in all nations of the Commonwealth consultation might then be carried on whenever necessary, and in fact, might go on at all times.⁵⁶ In the meantime, Dafoe suggested, the British Government should treat the Dominion High Commissioners in London as such diplomatic agents in order to improve Imperial communications.⁵⁷ Such a policy would be of inestimable advantage to the Commonwealth in regard to co-operation in both foreign and domestic policies of the Empire. Considering recent developments it could not be expected that such policies would continue to be formulated in London. Each Commonwealth nation would be able

55. M.F.P., Dec. 26, 1924, "Objections to the Conference System."

56. Ibid., see also M.F.P., Nov. 14, 1924, "Distinct Foreign Policies."

57. M.F.P., Dec. 30, 1924, "An Obsolete and Dangerous System."

to make its own policy in its own capital and communicate with its sister nations with a view to attaining uniformity wherever possible through the auspices of the intra-Commonwealth diplomatic machinery.⁵⁸ He emphasized that "when it [was] recognized that decisions as to common Empire policy [could] only be made in each Dominion capital and a method of co-operation [was] sought based upon the acceptance of this principle, we [would] begin to find the road through the morass."⁵⁹

In answer to criticism of his suggestions on the basis that they would break up the Empire, Dafoe countered with his old and standard reply.

What are the real ties that bind the people of the British nations together? Everyone knows that they are not the formal ties, but the ties of blood and of common traditions and ideals. The spirit of the evolution of Empire relations in the past has been that of increasing freedom. There is every reason to believe that the future of the British commonwealth will be best assured by continued adherence to that principle, and that freedom and co-operation is a better plan than any fixed devices, based upon undue apprehensions, for holding British nations together./⁶⁰

Thus, during this period, Dafoe continued his fight for a regularization of the accepted status of Dominion autonomy. At the same time he indicated in his editorials that under no circumstances would he support the theory that Imperial foreign policy should be directed from London, even after consultation with the Dominions. That, he felt, would be a negation of the freedom of action of the Dominions and, therefore, a loss of

58. M.F.P., Jan. 1, 1925, "Australia Appoints a Diplomatic Agent."

59. M.F.P., Jan. 31, 1925, "The Road Through the Morass."

60. M.F.P., Aug. 18, 1925, "Sir George Foster on Canada's Destiny."

their autonomous status. In that regard he insisted that the right of the Dominions to proceed on their own in international relations must be recognized. With that intent he opposed Dominion participation in the international ties of the United Kingdom, and denied that the preservation of the Empire depended on the retention of its diplomatic unity.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOAL ACHIEVED

By the beginning of 1926 the path which Canada was determined to follow in the future was well laid out. In his articles in the past Dafoe had covered all of his major arguments to bolster his case. It seemed that Canada had only to wait quietly for the next Imperial Conference at which all her demands would be satisfied. Although that was eventually to be the result of the Conference of 1926, the road to it was not as smooth as might have been expected. The year 1926 brought with it two harsh reminders to Canadians that the status we had achieved to that time, notwithstanding indications to the contrary, was not yet one of complete equality with that of Great Britain. In fact, using those two events as examples of our relationship with Great Britain, it was possible to demonstrate how important were the formal inequalities which still attached to Canada's status. These events were the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the case of Nadan vs. The King and the dissolution issue which arose in late June and early July of that year.

i. Nadan vs. The King

As early as 1888 the Canadian Government had successfully enacted legislation which forbade the taking of appeals on criminal cases to the Privy Council.¹ This Act was later² incorporated into the new Canadian Criminal Code in 1892 and³ into the revised Criminal Code of 1906, and had never been

1. Statutes of Canada, 51 Vict., c. 43, s. 1.

2. Statutes, 55-56 Vict., c. 29, s. 751.

3. Revised Statutes of Canada, 1906, c. 146, s. 1025

challenged by the Imperial authority. In defiance of the Code the case of Nadan vs. The King, strictly a criminal case, was brought before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in early 1926. The appeal itself was unsuccessful, but the decision brought down by the Lord Chancellor, Viscount Cave, dealt with the constitutional validity of the Canadian Act of 1888.⁴ Lord Cave ruled that while the Government of Canada could, under the authority granted to it by the British North America Act, 1867, preclude any Court in Canada from granting leave to appeal to the Privy Council in a criminal case, it could not take away the prerogative right of the King in Council to grant special leave to appeal to the foot of the Throne. He further ruled that because the Canadian Act was repugnant to the Privy Council Acts of the Imperial Parliaments of 1833 and 1844, that Act was therefore void and inoperative by virtue of the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865.

The fact that a British Court could annul an Act of the Canadian Parliament was to bring on violent repercussions by Canadian nationalists. It was a great blow against the theory of the equality of the Dominions with Great Britain. In considering the case, Dafoe wrote that the jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee should be settled "not by the terms of old statutes but by the political necessities of the times."⁵ He stressed the necessity of making it plain, "that in the case of self-governing Dominions the jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee extends only so far as the parliaments are willing to have it apply."⁶ Dafoe felt that the decision of the

4. A.C. [1926] 482.

5. M.F.P., Apr. 5, 1926, "The Jurisdiction of the Privy Council."

6. Ibid.

Privy Council in that case was brought down, primarily with the intention of indicating to the Dominions "their strictly subordinate legal position," because, although a number of opportunities to accomplish that in the past had arisen, no advantage had yet been made of them. After receiving the decision itself, however, Dafoe could find no fault with it. The legal case against the Canadian legislation had been set forth "with great clearness," and not the decision but rather the fiction of Dominion equality of status with Great Britain was questioned as a result. That decision, he believed, brought to a head the indecision with which statesmen approached the need for a clarification of Dominion status.

The Free Press, for one, very heartily agrees with their lordships that this formal statement of the purely legal aspect of the case is desirable. It gives a conclusive and much needed demonstration of the inadequacy of the methods by which Canadian statesmen have been seeking to enlarge the self-governing rights of Canada. It knocks into a cocked hat the much vaunted theory of constitutional right determined by conventions over-riding legal right, as fixed by statute to which most of our public men, who have interested themselves in this matter, have pinned their faith; and it thus raises an issue which will now have to be faced./7

Dafoe contended that while it was accepted that outside influences could override decisions of the Canadian Parliament, Canada could not consider herself a nation. "How can we ever be a nation until we get over the beliefs that only an external parliament can be trusted to change our constitution, and only a court not of our own appointing is competent finally to interpret our laws?"⁸ Considering these inequalities Dafoe

7. M.F.P., Apr. 22, 1926, "A Perfectly Plain Issue."

8. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 24, 1926, Dafoe to Henri Bourassa.

agreed that Canadian status was still colonial, and again demanded its regularization.

Legally we govern ourselves, because the Imperial Parliament permits us to do so; there are well defined limitations to this power; and even within this allotted sphere we are subject to the veto of the British Government. . . . While the Colonial Validity Acts remain on the Imperial statute book and the Judicial Committee asserts its power to review the legislation of the Dominion in keeping with its spirit and under its authority, Canada is not only a colony, but every avenue of escape is barred excepting that of a formal definite declaration, by the proper authority, that Canada is both legally and constitutionally a fully self-governing country./9

Some two months after the decision of the Privy Council became known, the Canadian Government had not yet expressed any opinion on it. Dafoe found this attitude to be entirely inconsistent with the theory, supposedly adhered to by the Prime Minister, that all British nations enjoyed the same status, for the decision provided the most complete test of the validity of that claim. In order to clarify its stand, he demanded that the Government put itself on record as opposing the theoretical implications of the decision by demanding a regularization, in a formal and constitutional manner, of the status of equality which Canadians had been told they enjoyed. If the Government would not comply, he suggested that it would be an admission that all its former claims were nothing more than "idle talk."¹⁰

ii. The Dissolution Dispute

It was not long after the commotion over the Privy Council issue began to subside that the Canadian dissolution

9. M.F.P., Apr. 26, 1926, "Self Governing: Or Not?"

10. M.F.P., May 11, 1926, "Testing Theory with Facts."

dispute claimed the attention of the entire Commonwealth. That was the first occasion since Confederation upon which a Canadian Prime Minister had been refused a dissolution by a Governor-General.¹¹

Mackenzie King, by the latter part of June, 1926, had come to the decision that his support in the House of Commons was too small for him successfully to carry on the Government. He was at the time faced with a possible defeat over the alleged scandals in the Custom's Department. In addition, he was of the opinion that the Conservative party was in no position to retain the confidence of the House in order to carry out the legislative measures for the remainder of the session. He therefore requested a dissolution of Parliament from Lord Byng, the Governor-General. His request having been turned down on June 28, King submitted his resignation to the Governor-General, and later that afternoon announced his resignation to the House, saying that he believed that "under British practice" he was "entitled" to a dissolution, and moved that the House adjourn.¹² On King's resignation the Governor-General summoned Arthur Meighen, the leader of the Conservative party, and asked him whether he could form a government which would command a majority in the House to get the work of the session concluded. Meighen, after having been assured of Progressive support, claimed that he could, and thus secured the appointment to

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11. For a full study of the dissolution power of the Crown, giving examples of where the Crown or Governors of colonies had actually refused a request for dissolution, see: Eugene A. Forsey, The Royal Power of Dissolution of Parliament in the British Commonwealth, (Toronto, 1943) passim.
 12. Debates, (HC) 1926, p. 5096.

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carry on. Adjournment or prorogation to give the Government time to re-elect the newly appointed Ministers not being feasible at that time of year, Meighen announced on June 29, that he had decided to carry on with a "a temporary Ministry . . . of seven members without portfolio, . . . who would assume responsibility as acting ministers of the several departments."¹⁴ He felt that in this manner it would be possible "to conclude with all convenient despatch the work of the . . . session."¹⁵ The new Government was quite successful in the several votes taken that day,¹⁶ but the following day, whilst in Committee of Supply, the legality of the Government was seriously challenged by King¹⁷ and at the end of a debate which lasted for two days, a motion of censure of the Government was put, and carried by one vote,¹⁸ some of the Progressives having voted for the measure. The House adjourned and the next day, before it could meet again, Meighen advised Lord Byng to dissolve Parliament. Lord Byng accepted the advice and Parliament was dissolved without prorogation and without having completed the work of the session or having voted supply beyond the end of July. The

13. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 21, 1926, D.B. MacRae to Dafoe; MacRae was in London at the time of writing and referred to a conversation which he had with Byng a few days earlier. He wrote that Byng claimed that "Meighen had insisted that he could carry on and avoid a general election and Byng could not shake him from this position." This conflicts with the tone of Meighen's statement to the House on June 29, wherein Meighen claimed that immediately following the resignation of King, Byng sent for Meighen "and requested him to form a new administration. Mr. Meighen advised His Excellency last evening that he would undertake [the] task." Debates, (HC) 1926, p. 5097.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Canada, House of Commons Journals, 1926, pp. 492-6, 503-4.

17. Debates, (HC) 1926, pp. 5211 ff.

18. Ibid., p. 5311.

uproar which was aroused at that time has produced echoes
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lasting to the present day.

The issue at the time was quite plain. Mackenzie King insisted that the Governor-General was wrong in not having granted him a dissolution when requested. He claimed that never since Confederation had there been "a single instance where a Prime Minister [had] advised a dissolution and [had] been refused it." This was also true of the relation between the Crown and the Prime Minister in Great Britain for over a hundred years, and only two years earlier His Majesty had granted a dissolution on the request of Ramsay MacDonald "after he had been in office only part of one session."²⁰ King insisted that the relation of the Governor-General to the Prime Minister in Canada must be the same as that of the Crown to the Prime Minister in Great Britain and if that theory was not accepted as true, then "any other theory of government [would] reduce . . . Canada from the status of a self-governing Dominion to the status of a crown colony."²¹ It would have meant that Canada was governed by the democracy of Great Britain, for Lord Byng was the appointee of the Government put into office by that democracy, and he was in a position to deny the wishes of the Prime Minister of Canada who was put into office by the democracy of this country.

19. As late as Mar., 1924, Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill maintained in the British Parliament that the final decision on a request for dissolution rested with the Crown, and that no Prime Minister had any right to insist on such a dissolution. Quoted by Eugene A. Forsey, in a letter to the editor, Winnipeg Free Press, Dec. 7, 1951, p. 30. Dufour, in his editorials, never admitted that fact.

20. Debates, (HC) 1926, p. 5224.

21. Ibid.

The possibility of these foregoing occurrences was foreseen earlier in June. A Free Press news report carried the information that the Government intended, if defeated, to ask for a dissolution; the Conservatives stated "that the governor general would not give it."²² Thereupon Dafoe stepped into the controversy. He favoured a dissolution being granted. This could not be denied the Government under the circumstances, "having regard to the precedents set in Great Britain in 1924." He justified this opinion with the fact that since the opening of Parliament in January, the King Government was retained in power "by the deliberate choice of Parliament and maintained there month after month by repeated votes of confidence." Furthermore, he believed that the 1924 precedent should rule. "What the King did on that occasion set a precedent for all deputies of the King in the Dominions or in the Provinces. An established Prime Minister, even if he is head of a minority government, is entitled, upon demand, to an appeal from Parliament to the electorate."²³ Dafoe repeated this opinion later in the month,²⁴ and on the eve of the crisis wrote an editorial in which he stated that even if Lord Byng should see fit not to grant a dissolution to King, an election would be inevitable under the circumstances, and in that light "it would be more proper to grant the dissolution to King."²⁵

After the resignation of the King Government Dafoe commented that if Lord Byng had looked to "the precedents set by

22. M.F.P., Jun. 16, 1926, p. 1, "Conservatives Fail in Snap Verdict."

23. M.F.P., Jun. 17, 1926, "Right to a Dissolution."

24. M.F.P., Jun. 26, 1926, "Precedents."

25. M.F.P., Jun. 28, 1926, "A General Election."

the Governors of the British colonies he [had] plenty of warrant for his action." That, however, was not a colonial affair and therefore colonial precedents should not have been used.

What should apply in Canada are not the precedents set by colonial governors, but the precedents set in Great Britain by the Sovereign. Canada is, in essence, a kingdom; since the King cannot reside here personally, it is necessary that he should be represented by deputy; and the rights and powers of that deputy with respect to the Canadian Parliament are the rights and powers which the King exercises with respect to the British Parliament. No more, no less. . . . The clinching precedents are those which have to do with the Ramsay MacDonald government./26

Dafoe felt that, should he desire it, Meighen had the right to request a dissolution, "today, tomorrow, or six months hence. If Lord Byng were to refuse it he would be logical -- and doubly wrong."²⁷

Nevertheless, he was so disturbed over the fact that Meighen received a dissolution before supply had been voted, that he left for Ottawa on the following day, so as to be able to inform himself accurately of all developments as they arose.²⁸ From Ottawa Dafoe continued to submit editorial comment to the Free Press pages by telegraph.²⁹ His opinions did not change. He wrote that if Canadians were colonials, then no case could lie against Lord Byng.³⁰ That sort of controversy fitted in perfectly with all of Dafoe's opinions on the autonomy issue. He had always insisted that the anomalous

26. M.F.P., Jun. 29, 1926, "A Constitutional Question."

27. M.F.P., Jun. 30, 1926, "Mr. Meighen and Dissolution."

28. Dafoe Papers, Jul. 3, 1926, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

29. Information gained in a personal interview with Mr. Grant Dexter, Executive Editor of the Winnipeg Free Press and Parliamentary correspondent of the Free Press in Ottawa at the time of these events.

30. M.F.P., Jul. 6, 1926, "The British Procedure."

status held by the Dominions eventually would prove dangerous. The dissolution dispute provided the proof to his argument. Although the British Dominions accepted the fact of their autonomy, because it was not registered as such in binding statutory form, the status of autonomy could be disputed or lost as the result of any particular act. For that reason he continued to keep the problem alive in the press until after³¹ the general election of that year. He also supported Mackenzie King in his election campaign on the autonomy issue, believing King to be the wronged party.

Dafoe never made a personal attack on Lord Byng for his action. He had accepted the fact that what Byng had done could have been constitutionally proper and that, therefore, it was the statutory standing of Dominion status which was in doubt and which must be rectified. He wrote:

. . . Baron Byng is not being attacked. What is under review and nothing more is the effect of his decision on Canada as a nation and as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth. His action, in view of the fact that he has departed from the precedent established by a British Sovereign implies that citizenship in Canada is a second class citizenship when compared with the citizenship of an Englishman, a Scotsman or a Welshman residing in the United Kingdom; in other words when an Englishman, a Scot or a Welshman moves to Canada he loses part of the fullness of his citizenship./32

Furthermore, he believed that even if Lord Byng's actions were not proper, the fault was not his. It was obvious

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31. M.F.P., Jul. 10, 1926, "An Issue for Canadians;" Jul. 13, 1926, "Mr. Meighen's Contradiction;" Jul. 17, 1926, "No Use Dodging the Issue;" Jul. 20, 1926, "Illegal Appropriation of Moneys;" Jul. 27, 1926, "The Responsibility of Party Leaders;" Aug. 9, 1926, "'Thou Art the Man!'" Sept. 8, 1926, "Colony or Nation?"
32. M.F.P., Jul. 10, 1926, "An Issue for Canadians."

that Byng misunderstood the character of his position in Canada, and "considered himself the governor of a colony with discretionary powers which he was bound to exercise if the necessity, as he saw it, arose." Nevertheless, Dafoe believed that it was Meighen's responsibility ^{to advise properly} ~~to properly advise~~ Lord Byng that he [Meighen] would be unable to carry on the Government under the circumstances. ³³ When Meighen began publicly to justify Byng's action, Dafoe used his own statements to criticize the Conservative leader. He compared Meighen's nationalistic attitude as shown in his Hamilton speech ³⁴ which suggested that Canada had the constitutional status of a sovereign nation, with his more recent defence of Lord Byng in relegating Canadian status to that of a colonial position. That conflict of opinions on Meighen's part, he believed, indicated that Meighen was not so much interested in Canadian autonomy as he was interested in letting nothing get in his way in his quest for political power in Canada. ³⁵ Dafoe was certain that the fault in the dissolution issue rested squarely on Meighen's shoulders.

I assume that it was a conditional engagement which he made with Lord Byng. He probably assured the Governor General that he could create a government that could carry on, but stipulated that in the event of a defeat in the House he would be entitled to a dissolution. It seems to me that a really effective case against Meighen can be made on the theory that he got into office by an engagement not to bring on an election and then forthwith, either by design or mismanagement, brought about the catastrophe, displaying in the whole process a callous disregard of the reputation of Lord Byng./36

33. M.F.P., Aug. 9, 1926, "'Thou Art the Man!'"

34. See above, p. 127, note.

35. M.F.P., Jul. 13, 1926, "Mr. Meighen's Contradiction," see also, Jul. 27, 1926, "The Responsibility of Party Leaders."

36. Dafoe Papers, Jul. 14, 1926, Dafoe to Grant Dexter.

Dafoe continued his criticism of Meighen by accusing him of illegally appropriating public funds by means of Governor-General's warrants. He quoted the Act of Parliament which dealt with the use of such a means of authorizing expenditures, and then argued that there was nothing in the Act which would have permitted Meighen's actions in securing funds for Government obligations beyond July 31.³⁷

The effect of such criticisms were clearly reflected in the decisive results of the general election held in September. When the Liberal party was elected with a clear majority it became obvious that the people disapproved of both Lord Byng's action and Meighen's defence of it. Dafoe saw this decision as an indication that the people of Canada would no longer tolerate any difference in their constitutional status as compared with the status of the people of Great Britain. Also all future Governors-General would have to "understand that they [were] constitutional monarchs who [would] have to content themselves with the powers and privileges which [were] sufficient to the King himself."³⁸ This unequivocal expression of the will of the electorate was to be reflected in the results of the Imperial Conference held later that year.

iii. The Imperial Conference of 1926

It was obvious by that time, as a result of the recent election, that Dafoe gave not only his own opinion on the autonomy issue, but that his opinion was supported by a majority of the Canadian electorate. He had insisted two years earlier that "the next Imperial Conference, . . . [would] deal with

37. M.F.P., Jul. 20, 1926, "Illegal Appropriation of Moneys."

38. M.F.P., Sept. 15, 1926, "Results That Are Decisive."

[the autonomy] question and [would] make the necessary formal declaration which [was] required to confirm and regularize the developments which [had] taken place."³⁹ He knew also that if Canada were to take such a stand at the coming Conference, her delegation would not be alone. A similar, if not identical,⁴⁰ viewpoint was held by the South African Government. He claimed that notwithstanding the statements of all the public men of the British nations on the equality of the different parts of the Commonwealth, that theory of equality was not operative. It remained

"little else but a pious affirmation without life or virtue;. . . In place of equality there is subordination; in place of parliamentary independence there is dependence; there is in the affairs of the Empire,. . . a super authority which seeks to over-ride and bind. We thus have fact and theory widely separated. We have a new plan of Empire and the old practices. Attempts to adjust practices to the new conception are blocked, discouraged, frowned upon, anathematized."/41

He stated that the issue had been "far too long. . . evaded."

Dafoe continued to insist that, considering the tremendous impetus given to national feeling by the recent election, the time for action had come and that Canada should declare her position, "preferably, of course, by an arrangement with Britain, which. . . can be made once our Government makes up its mind to request it."⁴² Just before the Canadian delegation sailed for Great Britain, Dafoe again cautioned against a last attempt towards centralization of the Empire. He wrote that the principle which underlay the whole modern conception

39. M.F.P., Oct. 2, 1924, "Mr. Meighen on Empire Relations."

40. M.F.P., Jun. 19, 1926, "Constitutional Theory and Practice."

41. Ibid.

42. Dafoe Papers, Sept. 17, 1926, Dafoe to G.M. Wrong.

of Empire relationships was "that each British nation must settle its attitude towards Imperial questions in its own capital, by its own Government and Parliament."⁴³

Insofar as Imperial relations were concerned the Imperial Conference recognized seven definite inequalities of status where Canada was concerned.⁴⁴ These were the position of the Governor-General in Canada, the Royal power of disallowance, the Royal power of reservation, the inability of the Canadian Parliament to pass laws having extra-territorial effect, the legislative supremacy of the United Kingdom Parliament as was expressed by the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865, the supremacy of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council over the Canadian Supreme Court and the conventional inequality in foreign relations by which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom could still advise His Majesty to commit the whole Empire to international obligations.⁴⁵ Dafoe reminded the public that the Conference itself could do nothing in relation to those inequalities that would adversely or beneficially affect them. The Conference was nothing more than a meeting where an interchange of views was made possible, and which might advise certain changes in Imperial affairs to the several Parliaments of the Commonwealth. Only when those Parliaments acted on the advice of the Conference could the extant anomalies be corrected. Nevertheless, the passing of such a resolution would have the effect of speeding up the

43. M.F.P., Sept. 30, 1926, "Canada and the Imperial Conference."

44. K.C. Wheare, The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status, 1st. ed., (Oxford, 1938) pp. 35-37.

45. Although that freedom had been, especially in 1923, restricted by conventions in certain respects.

removal of the laws which defined Dominion inferiority.⁴⁶

The Free Press sent D.B. MacRae to London as its reporter at the Conference. It was on the basis of the reports sent back by him that Dafoe wrote succeeding editorials commenting on the progress being made at London. MacRae took with him to London a memorandum, drawn up by Dafoe, which stated just what results he expected the Conference to produce.⁴⁷ As the Conference got under way Dafoe began to consider just what sort of a stand the Canadian delegation there would put up regarding a settlement of the status of the Dominions. He noted that the nationalists' view had been stated "with perfect clearness" by Premier Hertzog of South Africa, and by Desmond Fitzgerald of the Irish Free State; another view had been expressed by Premier Bruce of Australia and Premier Coates of New Zealand. He also noted that the Canadian position had "not been declared with equal sharpness."⁴⁸ In the light of information gleaned from reports sent back by MacRae it might be assumed that this lack of a declaration of where the Canadians stood on the issue was an intentional omission. The Canadians apparently were not prepared to go the whole way in securing the full status demanded by the South Africans. MacRae reported:

The Canadians had tried to steer Hertzog away from his insistence on pressing for a bold declaration. . . . Skelton is of the opinion that it would be impossible to get anything across this time in the way of a straight declaration. . . . With this understanding of the situation the plan of the Canadians, . . . is to press for three or

46. M.F.P., Oct. 18, 1926, "The Limitations of the Conference."

47. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 4, 1926, D.B. MacRae to Dafoe.

48. M.F.P., Oct. 22, 1926, "The Need for Frank Discussion."

four specific points on which they believe they can get action. One is the status of the Governor General. The Canadian plan is to have him made a viceroy. . . . Another point is to bring about more direct communication between the two governments. . . . Absolute control of our shipping is also being pressed, and one or two other matters. . . . Skelton's view is that if they can get action on these points this time it will be a substantial achievement and will permit further development of the national consciousness and make ready for another advance three years hence./49

General Hertzog, however, would not hold back, and the following day MacRae cabled to Dafoe stating that "South Africa's move for bold declaration for equality not likely to get through."⁵⁰ Dafoe was not surprised at these developments. He had never expected that King would declare himself openly in sympathy with the South African position. The motives behind this attitude, he believed, were political. Commenting on this political discretion on the part of both King and Lapointe, he stated that his own judgement was that "if they were to clear up the situation once for all the consequence to them in a political way would be wholly beneficial."⁵¹

In the meantime there was little progress being made at the Conference of a nature which would please the nationalistic elements. Reporting on a conversation he had held with Skelton, MacRae wrote:

Hertzog produced a statement of what he wanted done in connection with the equality issue. . . . Balfour said it was very good but. . . produced a formula of his own which, apparently, he had been working on for some time, knowing what was likely to come up. It is much briefer and accepted the principle of equality but had an additional clause to the effect. . . that while the principle of

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49. Dafoe Papers, Oct. 29, 1926, D.B. MacRae to Dafoe.
50. Dafoe Papers, Oct. 30, 1926, D.B. MacRae to Dafoe.
51. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 1, 1926, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

equality would be agreed to the unity of the whole must be accepted. . . . Skelton says that to accept the Balfour definition would be to make the Empire a unit in relation to foreign affairs. . . . Hertzog. . . said it would not be acceptable. That was also the view [of] the Irish and. . . Lapointe. . . . The Australians and New Zealanders favored Balfour. So did Newfoundland. . . . Skelton is doubtful if they can get the conference together on a definition. . . . However, if they see any chance of getting a statement of equality through they will press for it but they are not hopeful./52

MacRae had also told Skelton about the memorandum outlining Dafoe's views, which he had with him. "He wanted them immediately. . . . I. . . gave him a copy."⁵³ He further stated that King's attitude in London was not all that might have been expected of him. "Lapointe is making a better stand than King. The latter is the despair of his secretaries. . . . Lapointe is much better but is cautious."⁵⁴

Sir Clifford Sifton, sensing what was going on in London, on the same day suggested to Dafoe that he should cable MacRae to communicate with King emphasizing their views on what they expected the Conference to accomplish.⁵⁵ On the following day Dafoe cabled MacRae: "Clifford Sifton thinks country expects Conference settle complete competence Canada deal own affairs external internal. Anything less not acceptable. I agree. Pass along."⁵⁶ The message had no obviously immediate results. MacRae replied: "Skelton's view Conference unlikely agree equality declaration. Antipodes and Newfoundland opposed. Without agreement action through Conference impossible. Up

52. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 4, 1926, D.B. MacRae to Dafoe.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 4, 1926, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

56. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 5, 1926, Dafoe to D.B. MacRae.

against barrier while other governments refuse accept Canadian view. Message passed on."⁵⁷ Ten days later, however, Dafoe learned that the results achieved were better than had been to that time expected and that a written declaration had been agreed upon which King found to be "very good" and Skelton found to be "pretty satisfactory."⁵⁸ That declaration of equality must have been the one commonly known by the name of the Chairman of the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee, the Balfour Declaration. The report of the findings of that Committee was submitted the day following Dafoe's receipt of the above information.⁵⁹

The favourable results of the Conference were made known to the public on November 20. On the same day Dafoe wrote to Sifton expressing his views on the Canadian part in the accomplishment. He did not think much of it. He believed that King, "if he could have had his way, would have permitted the matter to drift. We shall owe the declaration, . . . chiefly to South Africa and probably Ireland. It is also possible that the representatives of the British Government played a considerable part. There is this to be said for them, that they are always prepared to abandon a position when they think the time has come when they can no longer safely hold it." He closed with a postscript in which he commented further on King's part at the

57. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 7, 1926, D.B. MacRae to Dafoe.

58. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 17, 1926, D.B. MacRae to Dafoe.

59. The declaration was worded as follows: "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." Canada, Summary of Proceedings, Imperial Conference, 1926, (Ottawa, 1926) p. 12.

Conference. "Of course in my comments I shall not try to pluck any laurels from W.L.M. King now. I have just seen a cable from the B.U.P. in which it is [stated] that King by his masterly statesmanship did the whole thing. Perhaps this will go down in history, which, as Henry Ford once observed, is mostly 'bunk'." ⁶⁰

This impression of Dafoe's was reinforced later in December when he received a letter from London from MacRae, in which MacRae tried to give a very brief outline of the proceedings of the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee.

The Conference proceeded in a rather strange way. Hertzog jumped in early and had some backing from the Irish. Skelton told me at the beginning that the Canadians were not going to push for a declaration. . . . They were afraid they could not get anything that would not have a joker in it. After I passed on your memorandum, business seemed to pick up and then a cable from Sir Clifford seems to have bucked them up. Lapointe and Skelton seemed to be on the right track but King was sidestepping. Then he got into the battle and from that time on the Canadians and Irish worked closely together and pushed hard. Bruce then started to come around but New Zealand and Newfoundland fought to the last./61

Sir Clifford Sifton held similar opinions with regard to King's efforts in London. After learning the details of the Report he wrote to Dafoe. "On the whole, there has been a very distinct advance and we have much to be thankful for, though, as I expected, we have no particular reason to thank King, whose qualities become less and less admirable as they are more closely exposed." ⁶² About three weeks later Sifton wrote again, referring to the part played in the proceedings in London by both Dafoe and himself.

60. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 20, 1926, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.

61. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 21, 1926, D.E. MacRae to Dafoe.

62. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 23, 1926, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

Do you remember sending me MacRae's address and saying that I might possibly think well to send him a telegram. I sent the telegram and curiously enough the Star office here in Toronto has news to the effect that a telegram came at a certain juncture when everything had been hanging back until it came, so far as Canada was concerned, but that thereafter it moved with precision and rapidity. Your diagnosis of the situation was therefore very accurate./63

The foregoing communications thus make it apparent that both Sir Clifford Sifton and Dafoe had much influence in turning the Canadian efforts at the Imperial Conference, where the autonomy issue was concerned, from one of possible "fence-sitting" to one of action in securing the sought after declaration for the regularization of Dominion status. It is assumed that had they not intervened at a critical point the results which were achieved might not have been as favourable as they were.⁶⁴ In a letter of congratulation to Skelton on the accomplishments in London, Dafoe reaffirmed his previous opinions. "From what happened in 1923 I felt sure that if any Dominion Premier stood out for a declaration of status our British friends would never let him go home disgruntled. All any Prime Minister had to do to bring matters to a head was to say: 'very well, I'll go home and ask the parliament of my Dominion to declare what it considers its status to be.' And once the British climb down they do it very well: as witness the declaration."⁶⁵

63. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 15, 1926, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

64. The author has not been able to establish this point from any sources other than those contained in the narrative here. The most logical source for any confirmation would have been the papers of Oscar Douglas Skelton, with whom Dafoe corresponded regularly, and who, it appears, was the intermediary between MacRae and the Canadian delegation at the Conference. Unfortunately those papers were lost; See above, p. 108, note.

65. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 9, 1926, Dafoe to O.D. Skelton.

Dafoe was very satisfied with the content of the declaration. There remained no doubt that the British Empire had been converted by it "into an alliance of free and equal nations."⁶⁶ He admitted that anomalies still remained and that there was considerable work to be done to eliminate them, but that was simplified by the fact that "the dream of a highly organized Empire, directed from a centre, [had] definitely vanished."⁶⁷ The British Parliament was now under obligation to co-operate with the Dominions in that task, and each Dominion was at liberty to go as far as it pleased in the removal of any remaining signs of inequality. He considered the Report as "the charter of Dominion independence," and yet took pleasure in the knowledge that the independence thus secured had not brought about a break in the British connection, as had been predicted by the centralist elements in the country.⁶⁸

In considering the evolution of the Empire to this point Dafoe agreed with Premier Hughes' of Australia opinion that there was nothing new in the Balfour Declaration "that wasn't implicit in the declaration made by the Imperial War Conference of 1917, and the practical application of the principle at the Peace Conference." That was exactly the view held by the Free

66. M.F.P., Nov. 22, 1926, "The Fuller Declaration of Equality."

67. Ibid.; For a comprehensive and detailed account of what changes were made in the relationships between Great Britain and the Dominions as a result of the Imperial Conference of 1926, what changes had still to be effected by legislation by the various British Parliaments in order to remove the anomalies which still existed, and how these problems were eventually dealt with, see; K.C. Wheare, Statute of Westminster, 4th. ed., (Oxford, 1949) passim.

68. M.F.P., Nov. 23, 1926, "The Charter of Dominion Independence."

Press -- that any laws and conventions which conflicted with those acts were obsolete, and for that reason the Free Press fought for a legislative regularization of those new principles in order to avoid conflict.⁶⁹ He thought that, in the long run, the chief credit for the evolution of the Empire was due, as a right, to Canada; but he repeated his opinion on the Canadian part at London by writing that "from the known facts, the honor of inducing action at the recent Conference goes to General Hertzog." He stated that Hertzog's Stellenbosch speech of May, 1926, giving his opinions on the nature of the status of the Dominions "was the clearest and most intelligent discussion of the question of Empire relationships ever made, and it indicated a solution which, in very large measure, is embodied in the constitutional declaration by the Conference." Dafoe expressed envy that this "compelling deliverance was not made by a Canadian public man." He felt that there had "always been a little fogginess in the discussion of Empire relationships by Canadian public men," and that therefore, "Canada's record, highly creditable though it is, falls a little short of what it might have been."⁷⁰

Dealing with the changed position of the Empire as a result of the declaration, Dafoe expressed complete satisfaction. Canada, from that day onwards, had the right to look after her own external affairs, could establish her own Ministries in any foreign capital and was subject to no overlordship or control any more than was Great Britain. Nor did these changes do any harm to intra-Imperial relationships.

69. M.F.P., Nov. 26, 1926, "A Matter of Credit."

70. Ibid.

"On the contrary," he claimed, "the Empire is a good deal stronger today than it was six weeks ago. In practice, we'll mind our own business and Great Britain will mind hers; and if a common interest develops the two countries will consult with one another and will co-operate."⁷¹ This was definitely possible because "the definition of equality [was] so precise and satisfactory that in the hands of any Dominion government it [was] a lever with which they [could] force any door."⁷²

He expressed similar views to John S. Ewart. At the same time he suggested that, in order to go forward constitutionally, Canada would have to do some work to get the "colonial complex" out of the minds of the French-Canadians. In this task he put his faith chiefly in Lapointe.⁷³ His opinion of French-Canadian colonialism was not a new one. It was one which he had held for many years, and which found expression ever since the days of French-Canadian opposition to separate Canadian ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, when the French-Canadian Liberals formed the major opposition to Sir Robert Borden's Union Government, until more recent days,⁷⁴ and which was largely confirmed by Henri Bourassa himself.⁷⁵

In the meantime the immediate problem to be faced was that of securing Parliamentary acceptance of the decisions of the Imperial Conference. In that regard Sir Clifford Sifton suggested to Dafoe that he should not let up in his efforts until that goal was assured. "In the meantime," he wrote,

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71. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 29, 1926, Dafoe to Evelyn Wrench.
72. Dafoe Papers, Nov. 29, 1926, Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton.
73. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 28, 1926, Dafoe to J.S. Ewart.
74. Dafoe Papers, Apr. 24, 1926, Dafoe to Henri Bourassa.
75. Dafoe Papers, May 7, 1926, Henri Bourassa to Dafoe.

"your editorials will have a chance to exert a very wide-spread influence, because I happen to know that every Minister and every Progressive member conscientiously reads them, or if not, the exceptions are very few."⁷⁶ That was one task which Dafoe needed no urging to perform.

76. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 21, 1926, Sir Clifford Sifton to Dafoe.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The main theme considered in this study was that of the gradual processes by which Canada secured recognition by the Imperial Parliament of the nationalistic interpretation of Resolution IX of the Imperial War Conference of 1917, and of the influences and the pressures brought to bear by Dafoe towards that end. The period under consideration may be divided into two distinct phases; the first being the years 1917-1924, and the second, from 1924 to 1926. During the first phase advances in status were made, sometimes planned, often haphazard; and several precedents indicative of national autonomy were established. During the second period the gains made by those precedents were consolidated, and to all appearances the Dominions had acquired their full autonomy, which was finally regularized by the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and legally confirmed by the Statute of Westminster in 1931.

The trend from 1917 to 1924 indicates that the process used to gain autonomous status was that of a continuous reinterpretation of the meaning of the term "diplomatic unity of the Empire." In 1919, during discussions at the Peace Conference, the British Empire delegation functioned as a diplomatic unit. That was a necessary fact, and accepted by all involved, because, at that time, the British Dominions had not as yet attained any real form of international identity. Dafoe concurred entirely with that plan, as was made evident by his acceptance of the early proposals that Empire representation on the Council of the League should be selected from a panel on which all British

Prime Ministers would be members. After the peace treaties had been signed and ratified, and the Dominions were assured their place as separate members of the League, the need for diplomatic unity lessened, the Dominions now had a new forum from which their international voices could be heard.

It was up to Canada to lead the way towards new steps in the direction of autonomy. Dafoe was early aware of that privilege, so far as Canada was concerned. In 1917 he wrote:

Canada has a wider range of alternatives than the other Dominions. She has the physical basis, the geographical location, and in some measure the political aptitude for complete national independence. The road is also open to her, if she chooses to walk in it, to join a kindred and friendly nation, whose potentialities in wealth and power are not computable [Yet] the inclination and intention of the great majority of the Canadian people is to remain a part of that assemblage of nations and peoples known under the general title of the British Empire./1

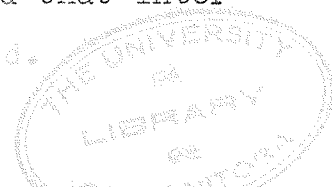
The first step was taken at the end of 1919 when Borden had negotiated with Lord Milner and secured the right of Canada to send a diplomatic representative to Washington. A wedge had been driven into the theory of diplomatic unity. Although Canada was not to take advantage of that right for some years it became obvious that the management of Dominion diplomacy would not remain long with the Foreign Office in London. Dafoe, seeing the opportunities involved there, continued to demand that the Government take full advantage of that forward step. That his advice was not followed cannot be ascertained, in the light of other criticisms he made of the implications of the Borden-Milner agreement.

1. Dafoe, "Our Future in the Empire," Miller, ed., New Era, p. 280.

The next refinement in the diplomatic unity of the Empire came at the Conference of 1921 and its aftermath, the Washington Conference. While the proponents of diplomatic unity tried to realize their ideal of the Imperial Cabinet system at this time, that ideal was increasingly opposed by nationalist opinion. In Canada, it was Dafoe and the Free Press which contributed much towards the turn in public opinion in favour of that nationalism. By the time Meighen went to the Imperial Conference he also accepted the opinion that if agreement could not be reached on any subject there, then the conferees must agree to disagree. Although it has been assumed that the Antipodean Dominions, Newfoundland and Great Britain tried to seal this breach in Imperial diplomatic unity after the departure of both Meighen and Smuts, their efforts were frustrated shortly afterwards by the outcry aroused over the British representation at the Washington Conference. The governmental criticism came from South Africa, while the Canadian feeling was expressed by a press, led to a large extent by an aroused Dafoe.

After the Chanak fiasco it was obvious that Imperial diplomatic unity was a vision which could not be attained. Subsequent changes in Imperial relations were led by Canada, and the path which was followed after that time was that of a gradual but definite break from British Foreign Office influence in Canadian external relations. The Halibut Treaty was signed, and that step forced the reconsideration of Imperial external relations by the Imperial Conference of 1923. The Dominions and the United Kingdom were from that time on free to carry out distinct and separate foreign policies

so long as no other part of the Empire was affected by them. Imperial diplomatic unity was from that time disregarded by Canada where common interests were not involved. Although an attempt was made in 1924 to re-establish that unity by binding the Dominions to the Lausanne Treaty, Canada fought against and defeated that plan. In all those steps Dafoe gave his full support to, and often led, the Government in its nationalistic advances. From 1924 onwards Canada faced the need of creating a foreign policy of her own which, whatever its limitations might be, would originate in Ottawa. In her quest for autonomy she was forced to separate herself from British entanglements. Until such a new Canadian foreign policy was developed the country drifted in an international vacuum. In his defence of Canadian nationalism Dafoe found himself supporting the Government's move in that direction. Canada had not as yet developed a foreign policy of her own, and in order to protect the recently secured nationalistic gains, she was forced to separate herself from participation in British foreign affairs. If that was not done there remained the danger of her again being committed through British obligations, without any consultation. In effect, that would have meant a drop in status to the nationalists. Thus, Dafoe was forced to look the other way while Canada drifted into isolation. Yet, he himself was not an isolationist. He was an internationalist and lived up to that conviction in his unhesitating support of the League of Nations. He faced a dilemma because he believed that inter-members of the Government has yet to be revealed.



That his influence, hidden as it may be, was appreciated by other strong nationalists in the country, is evident from the fact that shortly after the Imperial Conference of 1926, John S. Ewart wrote congratulating Dafoe for the results achieved there, and wished him "more power" to his "conquering elbow."²

2. Dafoe Papers, Dec. 24, 1926, John S. Ewart to Dafoe.

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APPENDIX I

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUPPLEMENT

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