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Wilfrid Laurier and Canadian Defence Autonomy 1902-1911

When Joseph Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary invited the Premiers of the self-governing colonies to attend a conference in London for the summer of 1902 one of the subjects uppermost in his mind was the problem of imperial defence. European hostility and rearmament required that Whitehall organize an examination of the Empire's military and naval strength, as well as direct the needed increases. The South African war was ending in an atmosphere of considerable anti-British sentiment throughout Europe, and Chamberlain understandably argued that the Empire stood in some jeopardy and that Britain and her dependencies should look to improved and increased naval and military defences.

In Ottawa, on the other hand, there was a distinctly different outlook regarding imperial defence, particularly about Canada's subordination to the War Office and the Admiralty. In reply to Chamberlain's invitation Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier stated bluntly that the "military defences" of Britain and the self-governing colonies could not be the subject of "common action." Rather, defence issues had to be left to the discretion and disposal of the "different governments of the empire."¹

The Prime Minister's comments indicated clearly the reluctance of his administration either to increase Canada's defence contributions to the Empire or to permit the country's armed forces to come under the direct control of the Admiralty and the War Office. Throughout the period under review the policies and initiatives pursued by Laurier's successive administrations brought to the fore the question of Canada's belligerent status during a period of war should a conflict begin between Britain and a foreign adversary. For nearly a decade Ottawa's actions dramatized the marked distinction between a status of active and passive belligerency for Canada. It became increasingly clear that when Britain was at war so too was Canada, with the significant caveat

that Canada might well remain outside the conflict in question and thus adhere to a policy of passive belligerency.

On the very eve of his departure for the 1902 Conference Laurier bluntly observed that he was not in favour of any increase in Canada's defence expenditures. In this context he referred critically to a movement in Britain which he described as designed to involve the self-governing colonies in Britain's defence costs and programs thus leading to colonial involvement in imperial wars.² As will become apparent this aversion on Laurier's part to increased military and naval costs and defence planning centralized in London became one of the more salient features of his successive administrations.

Wilfrid Laurier's refusal to identify Ottawa with British initiatives, and his references to a status of passive belligerency for Canada should Britain become involved in war were acknowledged though not approved by many of his contemporaries. Thus George Tyler Denison, the president of the Imperial Federation League in Canada, accused the Laurier administration of failing to educate the Canadian public regarding its duties to the Empire's defence needs and for being far too inclined to "watch with anxious solicitude every indication. . . of the varying movements of popular sentiment." Indeed, Denison argued that the education of Canadians regarding their obligations to imperial defence rested "generally" with "outside enthusiasts" like himself.³ George Denison blamed lacklustre support for the Empire's military and naval requirements in part on the country's French-Canadians whom he candidly admitted did not share "the sentiments of Imperialism" with those of "English descent."⁴

Canada's Governor-General, Lord Minto, was candid and blunt about the issue of Canadian abstention in imperial defence. He emphasized that London's direction of the South African war and the Canadian forces involved in it had brought to the surface in Canada an "extreme sensitiveness" to "anything like the mildest Imperial advice." He warned that Canadian nationalism was on the rise and was symptomatic of a broad desire for "independence."⁵

Lord Minto's analysis of Canadian attitudes was both prescient and timely given the fact that Laurier had reiterated his theme of abstention from British defence planning within days of his departure for the London meetings. In a private conversation with the Governor-General he expressed the fear that discussion of the subject at the conference might well expose Canada to the threat of being obliged to make financial payments to a general defence fund for the Empire, specific commitments by Ottawa regarding the fortification of the country's frontiers, and an agreement on the use of Canadian troops throughout the world.

Indicative of the Prime Minister's marked unwillingness to consider imperial defence as a necessary item on the conference agenda was his rejection of Chamberlain's request for additional aid during the closing weeks of the South African war. According to Minto, Laurier regarded the request as an "injudicious" one, which if made public would be seized upon by certain segments of French-Canadian opinion as indicative of the "small . . . value" of the British army in bringing to heel "an armed peasantry."⁶

Lord Minto's observations regarding the Laurier administration's unwillingness to commit the country's armed forces to any genuine imperial purpose were judicious and appreciated in Whitehall. The Colonial Office, for example, noted that Ottawa was only interested in the promotion of reciprocal "commerical relations" with the United States.⁷ The reference to Canada's trade and economic goals was a correct assessment of the fact that the Laurier administration was becoming concerned over an increasingly protected United States market characterized by Congress' approval of the highly protectionist McKinley and Dingley tariffs of 1890 and 1898, respectively.⁸ In the light of this commercial hostility defence initiatives emanating from London would understandably receive less attention.

Despite Lord Minto's cogent warnings the concept of imperial defence centralization was endorsed by St. John Brodrick, the Secretary of State for War, on the eve of the Conference. According to Brodrick there was a good chance that the meetings would lead to "some arrangement" whereby "the whole forces of the Empire" would be made available in a war in which "the whole interests of the Empire" were involved. As Brodrick viewed the contemporary scene the Conference would reveal the willingness or unwillingness of the colonies to participate in defence policies that would "more closely link together the different parts of the Empire."⁹

On the issue of increased aid for imperial defence and the subordination of colonial naval and military units to Whitehall, St. John Brodrick spoke for a considerable body of opinion in Britain. Most Englishmen of the period in question regarded the self-governing colonies as dependencies and though many accepted Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders as their equals in a variety of matters they could not bring themselves to recognize colonial nationhood as equality of status with the United Kingdom. Given this prevalent attitude it was not at all surprising that the Admiralty and the War Office viewed the 1902 conference as an excellent opportunity for soliciting increased colonial contributions for the Empire's defence and for extending London's control over the colonies' armed forces.¹⁰

St. John Brodrick's public endorsement of imperial defence centralization did not pass unnoticed or unopposed in the Canadian cabinet. Having barely arrived in London for the Conference, Frederick Borden, the Minister of Militia and Defence, hastened to warn Laurier that Brodrick was determined to commit Canada to "something definite" on the defence issue. In terms that remarkably paralleled those of his Prime Minister, Borden emphasized that he was "entirely against" Canadian assistance "of either men or money to foreign wars" in which Britain might be involved.¹¹

Throughout the sessions of the 1902 Conference it became increasingly apparent that Canada's delegation was committed solely to the nation's defence autonomy. The paucity of Canadian comment on the need for centralized planning bore silent testimony to Ottawa's aversion to directives from Whitehall. When referring specifically to the concept of imperial control over Canada's military and naval units, Ottawa's emissaries emphasized that the administration and direction of such units by London would entail "an important departure from the principle of Colonial self-Government." Thus, they were "obliged to withhold their assent to the propositions of the Admiralty and the War Office."¹²

On the issue of Canadian armed forces autonomy the Laurier administration received stalwart support from Sir Charles Tupper who had presided as Prime Minister over Canada's last Conservative administration in 1896. According to Tupper, Ottawa was well advised to oppose any movement designed to bring about Canadian aid for the imperial navy. Proposals of that nature, he argued, stemmed from Chamberlain's tendency to "demand" financial contributions from the dependencies. The former Prime Minister lauded Laurier for his stubborn refusal to commit Canada to any defence contributions at the recently concluded London conference.¹³

Though Ottawa's rejection of imperial defence centralization was couched in diplomatic language, the country's Governor-General presented London with a far more realistic evaluation of the Dominion's policies. According to Lord Minto the strongest influence at work within that Canadian public was a movement towards nation-state independence as well as a marked resentment of anything that smacked of "imperial interference." As Minto viewed Canada's performance at the Conference, Canadians were determined to have "their *own* army and . . . *own* fleet." Canada's forces, he noted, would be made available to Britain only if the public agreed that such an offer should be made. Lord Minto described Canada's determination to control her own armed forces as symptomatic of the growing pains "of a Young nationality." If a navy was established by Canadians it would

have to be "their own." Similarly, a Canadian army, according to many in the country, would be able "to teach the British army a thing or two" and under no circumstances would the public ever permit that force to be absorbed into an "imperial pool."

Though the Governor-General deplored the emergence of nationalism in the country as "more than annoying" he proved remarkably far-sighted regarding the ultimate autonomy of Canada's armed forces. Commenting upon the growing movement by the Laurier administration to control unilaterally whatever armed forces it possessed, Minto accepted such a development as "natural" and a consequence "of the growing feeling that Canada must get out of leading strings."¹⁴

The behaviour of the Canadian delegation to the 1902 Conference discouraged Chamberlain's hopes for an empire-wide *Kriegsverein*. The fact that the other self-governing colonies followed Canada's lead and were reluctant to commit themselves to increased expenditures for imperial defence has been well documented.¹⁵ Joseph Chamberlain viewed Canada as the villain of the piece, the member of the Empire most inclined to ignore its imperial responsibilities and to pursue its own defence autonomy. In the aftermath of the Conference, Chamberlain damned Canada for "doing less than any other part of the Empire for its own defence and for the general maintenance of imperial interests." He accused Canadians of assuming "proportionately a smaller part in the late [South African] war" than any other region of the Empire. He observed bitterly that Ottawa contributed "not a single penny" to the Royal Navy upon which Canada relied for her defence and did not contribute "in any way" to Britain's military needs.

From the Colonial Secretary's view, Canada's "persistent refusal" to assume any significant portion of the Empire's defence burden might well lead to the country's union with the United States. He tacitly admitted that the Laurier administration was well on the way towards an independent control of its armed forces, and gloomily observed that there was "no indication" that imperial admonitions on the issue were "likely" to sway an obstinate Ottawa.¹⁶

Joseph Chamberlain's ascerbic criticism of Canada's lack-lustre support for imperial defence and her move towards autonomy for the nation's armed forces was even more vigorously emphasized by Lord Minto. Having concluded a six year term as Governor-General, Minto was in a far better position to assess and evaluate Ottawa's policies regarding the autonomy of Canadian armed forces than many of his contemporaries in Whitehall. Looking to the imminent transfer of Halifax from the Admiralty to Canada, Minto damned the Canadian militia as "totally inefficient" and directed by an "inefficient headquar-

ter [*sic*] staff." The assumption by Ottawa of the defence of Halifax, he argued, would place an important imperial naval bastion in "incapable and untrustworthy hands."

According to the former Governor-General, imperial policy catered to an emerging Canadian defence autonomy. He decried Whitehall's timid approach to the Laurier administration on this very issue in particularly critical terms. London's actions, he emphasized, could be described in simple terms.

The strain is too great for us; we can't afford such and such a position. We hand it over to you; and you must look after it.

A policy of the nature he had just decried, Minto insisted, held out to Canadians the promise of their "ultimate independence." The only means of arresting this movement was for the War Office and the Admiralty to make clear that Canada's armed forces would serve "only under Imperial command" and not under instructions from Ottawa.¹⁷

Despite Lord Minto's warnings, control of Halifax was handed over to the Canadian administration beginning in mid-summer of 1906. It fell to Minto's successor, Earl Grey, to attempt to persuade a stubborn Ottawa of the virtues of increased Canadian contributions to the Empire's defence needs and, needless to say, of the efficacy of placing Canada's armed forces under unilateral British control. His initiatives in this direction were frustrated every bit as much as those of his vice-regal predecessor.

In an attempt to sway Laurier, the Governor-General brought to his attention the writings of Sir John Colomb, a long-term proponent of increased colonial assistance for the Empire's military and naval requirements.¹⁸ Grey argued that colonial trade accounted for one-third of the Empire's total. Of this trade, which amounted in value to £234,000,000, more than half represented commercial exchanges between the dependencies and the foreign world. As Grey viewed the contemporary scene, a major problem facing London and Ottawa was an equitable sharing of "the burden" of naval protection for the trade to which he referred. Indicating clearly that he was well aware of the Laurier administration's opposition to involvement in imperial defence schemes, the Governor-General described the situation as "a problem which would tax the best statesmanship" the Empire could provide.¹⁹

Earl Grey's questioning of Canada's commitment to the Empire's needs was echoed by the Colonial Office, though in terms that mildly endorsed Ottawa's moves towards military and naval autonomy. Within that department Hartman Just observed bluntly that the Laurier administration was totally opposed to participation in meeting imperial defence requirements.²⁰ As Just viewed the Canadian scene,

the Laurier government was determined "to provide fully" for the country's "own defence" but would not contribute "men and money" for imperial policies "controlled and administered by some authority external to Ottawa." Ottawa was proceeding to unilateral control over the country's armed forces, Just argued, and this policy would reduce London's costs and responsibilities where Canada was concerned. As he pithily observed, "Why spur the willing horse?"²¹ Such observations anticipated to a considerable degree an emerging albeit reluctant acceptance by Whitehall of Canadian defence autonomy.

Hartman Just's shrewd observations regarding Canadian policies were confirmed almost immediately at the Imperial conference which opened in London on April 17, 1907. During the initial sessions the Australian Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, referred favourably to the establishment of an imperial council which he suggested might well co-ordinate the Empire's policies in such vital fields as defence and foreign policy.²² Reaction in concerned Canadian circles was swift.

Thomas Coté, the managing editor of *La Presse*, immediately contacted Laurier to note that "all newspapers" were reporting that the Prime Minister "had accepted" the establishment of an imperial council to coordinate defence and foreign policies throughout the Empire.²³ Laurier was swift to reply. He pointed out that the conference provided for "no Imperial Council at all" and that relations between London and Ottawa "in the future as in the past" would continue to be conducted "under ministerial responsibility."²⁴ Wilfred Laurier's emphatic endorsement of Canadian control over its defence policies and armed forces barely disguised under the euphemism of "ministerial responsibility" was put to the test all over again less than two years later with the convocation in London of a conference designed to tackle the specific problem of imperial defence.

The decision by Whitehall to convene a conference on purely defence issues as they affected the Empire came shortly after action by the House of Commons in Ottawa on March 29, 1909, to approve the establishment of a Canadian naval service. The government's decision to proceed to the construction of a navy gave faint encouragement to advocates of imperial defence centralization. On the naval issue Earl Grey was obliged to inform his home government of Ottawa's opposition to naval and military programs embracing the component parts of the Empire. The Governor-General's report, of course, raised all over again Canada's questionable status during a period of war.

Ottawa's initial reaction to the proposed defence conference can only be described as negative. According to Earl Grey, Wilfrid Laurier argued that "no such Conference, . . . was necessary." Under pressure from the Governor-General, Laurier withdrew his initial opposition.

Though the Canadian government had not received "sufficient information" regarding the necessity of "convening a Conference," Laurier was prepared to send Sir Frederick Borden and Louis Philippe Brodeur, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, to London thus enabling the Canadian cabinet at least "to meet the views of the Imperial authorities."

As Earl Grey described contemporary Ottawa, the Prime Minister's lack-lustre support for imperial defence measures and his determination to restrict expenditures in this field to purely Canadian requirements was due in large part to popular sentiment in Quebec. French-Canadians, the Governor-General observed, were markedly opposed to "any action" associated with "a policy of militarism." Faced with this reality, Laurier was obliged "to go slow" regarding defence initiatives that might commit Canada to measures of a genuinely imperial nature.²⁵

In a subsequent communication to London, Lord Grey emphasized that the Laurier administration was not prepared to participate in any defence schemes beyond the protection of Canada's coasts. It was only under this understanding that Borden and Brodeur would proceed to the conference in London. Somewhat sympathetically, the Governor-General described Wilfrid Laurier as holding as "genuine and deep-seated" convictions on the issue of armaments as any member of "the Peace Society." Laurier, he noted, viewed an arms race "with all the horror of a man who sees in them only the shadow of impending National bankruptcies."

Earl Grey's description of a pacifist and autonomy-minded Prime Minister carried with it a criticism of inconsistency. Wilfrid Laurier, he argued, had publicly declared Canada's willingness "to shed her last drop of blood and to spend her last dollar to maintain the naval supremacy of the Crown." But the Prime Minister would not admit the necessity for "immediate action" where naval re-armament was concerned nor would he do anything to prevent Britain's "naval supremacy" from being challenged.²⁶ And however accurate his comments on Laurier may have been, the Governor-General had not fully described the split in Canadian opinion regarding increased military and naval expenditures. In French-speaking Canada and more particularly in Quebec very few supported an augmentation in naval expenditures or indeed the establishment of a Canadian navy. Quebec, of course, was a vital cog in the fortunes of the Liberal party and only one year earlier had provided fifty-three of its sixty-five seats in Laurier's electoral victory.²⁷

On the eve of the Imperial Defence Conference it was obvious that Whitehall had been forewarned of Canada's aversion to imperial

defence schemes as well as Ottawa's drive for naval autonomy. The Colonial Office described Ottawa's policies as "serious and unsatisfactory." Canada, it was pointed out, was only concerned with her own defence and that was "all" Britain could expect.²⁸ The Colonial Secretary, the Marquis of Crewe, gloomily agreed by observing that Borden and Brodeur might well be unable to offer or propose "any positive suggestions" regarding an imperial defence role for their country.²⁹ Crewe was undoubtedly aware of Laurier's comments decrying the jingoists of both Britain and Canada who were determined to bring Canadians "into the vortex of militarism" which was "the blight and curse of Europe." As the Prime Minister emphasized he was "not prepared to endorse any . . . policy" that exposed his country to such European threats.³⁰

As the Canadian delegates prepared to sail for London, Earl Grey all but anticipated the results of the conference. Referring to the House of Commons resolution regarding the proposed navy, the Governor-General insisted that Canada was prepared to establish a naval force "of her own." Though many in Ontario and particularly J.S. Willison, the editor of the *Toronto News*, were prepared to contribute vessels and financial aid to the Royal Navy, the reality of Laurier's political reliance on French-speaking Quebec prevented any such developments.³¹ Holding in essence the balance of power in Ottawa, French-Canadians would only support a navy "constructed, owned, manned and controlled by Canada."³² According to Sir Wilfrid's newly-appointed Minister of Labour, William Lyon Mackenzie King, Earl Grey himself was opposed to any financial contributions to meet Britain's defence needs. The Governor-General, he noted, supported policies whereby Canada would undertake the "naval defence of her own waters."³³

Besides French-Canadian opposition to naval programs of a genuinely imperial nature, Louis Brodeur observed that Canadian farmers in Canada's West were absolutely disinterested in any military and naval expenditures. The West, he emphasized, had witnessed the rise of many radical trade unions which were almost all hostile to all forms of militarism. The Minister of Marine also dramatized the recent migration to the Prairie Provinces of a large number of American farmers. This group, he noted, was similarly opposed to increased defence spending.³⁴

With considerable segments of Canadian opinion markedly opposed to defence arrangements of a genuinely imperial nature Ottawa's delegates to the Defence Conference pressed strongly for British acceptance of a Canadian navy comprised of destroyers and cruisers based on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. According to Louis Brodeur,

the Admiralty wanted Canada to commit herself to the construction of a dreadnought to be followed by three cruisers and finally several destroyers and submarines in addition to a substantial financial contribution to Britain's own naval requirements. Brodeur also noted that the First Lord of the Admiralty, Reginald McKenna, was anxious to see the Canadian fleet located along the Pacific Coast of British Columbia leaving Canada's eastern seaboard to the protection of the Royal Navy.

Due to Brodeur's efforts and those of Frederick Borden, the Admiralty dropped its request for a financial contribution from Ottawa, a concession the Minister of Marine described as a great step forward. Brodeur also reported that Laurier's emphasis at the 1902 Imperial Conference on Canada's naval autonomy had made great progress. As he described the contemporary scene such developments were due to the Prime Minister's policies and were being adopted by the Australians.³⁵

Louis Brodeur's policies at the Conference slowly won reluctant acceptance in Whitehall. In the immediate aftermath of the Conference the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, admitted that London could not interfere with the Dominions' control over their armed forces. He accepted the fact that their administrations had to consult "local sentiment" when it came to the establishment and use of their military and naval services. Asquith emphasized, of course, the desirability of a "homogeneous organization" for all the Empire's forces and somewhat lamely expressed the hope that this would be recognized by the self-governing colonies "more and more *in the future*."³⁶

With the conclusion of the defence conference, cabinet in Ottawa began preparations leading to the establishment of a Canadian navy. As William Lyon Mackenzie King described the scene, there was general agreement regarding the fleet's construction in Canada and its location on both coasts with only Sir Richard Cartwright, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, holding out for either a cash contribution to the Admiralty or the gift to Britain of "two . . . dreadnoughts." Cartwright's arguments were rebuffed by George Graham, the Minister of Railways and Canals, who pointed out that such expenditures would lead to one-third of the government's revenues being allocated for naval and military purposes. William Perley, Minister of Public Works, favoured the construction of the new vessels in Canada on the grounds that Canadians could "build them better" while William Fielding, the Minister of Finance and Nova Scotia's member in cabinet, understandably promoted expenditures directed towards the Maritime shipbuilding industry.

Mackenzie King himself favoured the construction of the fleet in Canada and opposed any contribution to the Admiralty as a return to "colonial days and distasteful in every way."³⁷ King felt that the naval expenditures contemplated could only be justified from a "national standpoint" and on grounds of "national pride." Echoing Louis Brodeur's fears, the Minister of Labour cited Canada's growing American population, her trade unions and the farming West as segments of society that would have to be considered. In King's opinion, the development of Canada's resources and strength came "first" and even the consideration of a naval program smacked of having been "stampeded by British agitation."³⁸ As the naval bill took final shape, King reiterated his concern that the fleet units when constructed be regarded as "local" and that any suggestion of "imperial co-operation" be clearly regulated by Ottawa.³⁹

Mackenzie King's concerns regarding control of the Canadian fleet were assuaged when the Naval Service Act was given final assent on May 10, 1910. The act contained the following significant section about the use of the fleet:

In case of an emergency the Governor in Council *may* place at the disposal of His Majesty, for general service in the Royal Navy, the Naval Service or any part thereof, any ships or vessels of the Naval Service, and the officers and seamen in such ships or vessels, or any officers or seamen belonging to the Naval Service.⁴⁰

Wilfrid Laurier's explanation for this section clearly revealed his intentions regarding Canadian control of the fleet and his explicit endorsement of a status of passive belligerency for the country's armed forces. He argued that Canadian fleet units would not engage in warlike activities without authorization from Ottawa, and then only in situations where self-defense action was required. Also, he emphasized, the government would itself judge whether Canada should or should not become involved in wars in which the United Kingdom was involved.

The position we take is that it is for the parliament of Canada, which created this navy, to say when and where it shall go to war. If England is at war we are at war and liable to attack. I do not say that we shall always be attacked, neither do I say that we should take part in all the wars of England. That is a matter that must be determined by circumstances upon which the Canadian parliament will have to pronounce and will have to decide in its own best judgement.⁴¹

With the conclusion of the naval debate Canadian opinion, predictably, was divided. Henri Bourassa, who had broken with Wilfrid Laurier over the issue of even limited participation in the South

African war, was totally opposed to any naval program. In a two and one-half hour speech before supporters in Montreal, he obtained approval for a resolution damning parliament for approving a policy without "the consent of the people."⁴²

Subsequently, Bourassa charged that a Canadian navy placed at the disposal of the Admiralty would involve the country in all the wars instigated by Joseph Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes. Parliament's role, he insisted, would merely be to oppose policy decisions arrived at in London. Even before such a debate began, Canada's fleet, as part of the Royal Navy, would either have been annihilated or have emerged victorious. According to Bourassa even a limited participation in British wars was impossible. If the United Kingdom was involved in conflict, Whitehall would extort from Canada all that was possible in both finance and manpower.⁴³

Henri Bourassa's staunch opposition to the navy was endorsed in the Commons by Frederick D. Monk, the sitting Conservative Member of Montreal Jacques Cartier.⁴⁴ Monk noted that Britain had concluded a lengthy number of agreements guaranteeing the neutrality as well as the integrity of Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Ottoman Empire, Persia and Portugal. Such countries, he argued, held no interest whatsoever for Canada, yet Britain's guarantee might well lead Canada into war. In a similar fashion Monk raised the issue of Canada's obligation to follow the United Kingdom into an unjust war. The Conservative Member's sub-amendment to the naval bill calling for a popular plebiscite on the issue was subsequently defeated in the Commons by a vote of 175 to 18.⁴⁵

A strong endorsement of the government's actions came from Montreal's Liberal-leaning *La Presse*. According to *La Presse*, Canada was an autonomous power and her autonomy had been recognized at imperial conferences in London. Thus, the establishment of an independent navy was a neutral development, and one which should be implemented: other nation states with far less population than Canada, such as Columbia and Paraguay, maintained their own fleet units. A Canadian navy, the journal argued, would enable the country to assist in the protection of the Empire, but it would also symbolize Canada's independence and her right to control her own armed forces.⁴⁶

Highly vocal opposition to the naval program came predictably from certain segments of English-speaking Canada. Speaking in the Ontario legislature the Premier, Sir James Whitney, deplored Ottawa's determination to proceed with the navy. As Sir James described the naval bill, Canada had "missed an opportunity" by failing to offer Britain "a Dreadnought, or even two such ships." Such action, Whit-

ney argued, would have indicated clearly to "all outside nations" that the members of the Empire would be found "standing together when the time of stress" arrived.⁴⁷

Far more critical of the Laurier administration's defence policy was Stephen Leacock, at that time a junior professor of economics at McGill University. Referring sarcastically to the development of colonial navies, he predicted that "wisdom" would ultimately come to Canadians when they realized "what a little thing" their proposed naval establishment would be. With this "wisdom" would come a realization that Canada's only role was to assist Great Britain which was "so powerful" and "trained in the arts of war and peace." Far better for Canada, he emphasized, to aid and assist a "large . . . populous . . . powerful" mother country rather than to assume an independent stance based on a population of only six million which was "struggling to sit sideways across a continent and hold it down by the edges."⁴⁸

Stephen Leacock's admonitions received short shrift in the Colonial Office, which was relatively sympathetic to Ottawa's autonomous stance. There, the comment was made that Leacock was undoubtedly "a man of distinction," as an economist. Outside the sheltered halls of academe, however, he was advised "to leave naval policy alone."⁴⁹

Alexander McNeil, a former Member of Parliament and vice-president of the British Empire League in Canada, though agreeing with Laurier's naval policy, suggested that it did not go far enough. Canada, he argued, should have offered "immediate aid to the mother country" in the form of a gift of a dreadnought. At the same meeting, George Denison rejected Ottawa's proposed naval establishment as being based on "small local fleets" and therefore of "little use."⁵⁰

Though opponents of the naval bill were numerous and vociferous, it is significant that highly prominent Conservatives endorsed the Laurier administration's initiatives. Entering the lists once more to support Canada's naval autonomy, Sir Charles Tupper urged Robert Borden, his successor as Conservative party leader, to support the government in its promise to build a Canadian navy. According to Tupper the naval issue transcended party politics. Those members of his party who supported the contribution of dreadnoughts to the Royal Navy were "wrong." In their public pronouncements that Britain was unable to defend herself such Conservatives were contributing to "much mischief in Germany and elsewhere."⁵¹

In his defence of the administration's naval program Tupper argued that had Canada followed New Zealand's example of contributing dreadnoughts to the Admiralty the country would have been obliged on a proportional basis to have funded between "seven or fourteen

Dreadnoughts" or have been "held up to contempt as niggardly" in London. Describing the imperial government as "unprincipled," Sir Charles expressed amazement that Canadian Conservatives should "rush to support" of a Britain which had treated the colonies "in the most insulting manner." For the former Prime Minister such behaviour endorsed the principle that "if you are smitten on the one cheek, you must turn the other."⁵²

Robert Borden gave an early endorsement to the government's naval program and echoed some of Tupper's suggestions. Speaking before the Toronto Centre and South Conservative clubs on November 2, 1909, he called for a navy whose construction would utilize Canada's "natural resources and raw materials." Above all, he argued, the country's "labouring class ought to be considered and employed as far as might be reasonably possible."⁵³

Robert Borden's speech earned him the recognition of the Colonial Office which described his statements as "able, vigorous and . . . worth reading."⁵⁴ The opposition leader's comments were also accepted by the Office as indicative of broad support for the Canadian navy given the fact that both the Liberal and Conservative parties were "committed to that policy."⁵⁵

Though Laurier's naval legislation successfully cleared Parliament it remained the object of bitter attack by Henri Bourassa and his supporters. The focus of their attacks directed itself to the federal constituency of Drummond Arthabaska in Quebec which had been successfully held by the Liberals ever since the general election of 1887. In anticipation of a by-election scheduled for November 3, 1910, Bourassa charged that the establishment of a Canadian navy would lead inevitably to conscription. Laurier was swift to reply.

Speaking in Montreal barely three weeks before the by-election the Prime Minister refuted the conscription charge and insisted that his administration's policies were the same in 1910 as they had been in 1902. He was determined to defend Canada's territorial integrity on the principle of local autonomy. His naval program would not grant Great Britain what had been emphatically denied eight years earlier. The legislation in question, when implemented, would not remove control of the navy from the administration, from Parliament or from the Canadian people.⁵⁶

On November 3, 1910, Drummond Arthabaska was seized by Bourassa's Nationalist candidate. When the polls closed Arthur Gilbert had defeated his Liberal opponent, Joseph Edouard Pelletier by 211 votes. Though the defeat was an ominous portent for the government, the Prime Minister was soon more successful in London on the issue of Canadian defence autonomy.

With the naval bill a fait accompli it remained to be seen to what extent the imperial administration was prepared to accept Laurier's frequent references to absolute Canadian control over the fleet units concerned. The Colonial Office, of course, had accepted Ottawa's control over the proposed force. Overall, however, opinion in Whitehall was as divided as that in Canada, particularly over the degree that a self-governing dominion might insist on a status of passive belligerency in wartime. Regarding the use of Canada's fleet in a war waged by the United Kingdom the Colonial Office once again expressed its doubts. There, Arthur Berriedale Keith argued that Canada would be "extremely unwilling" to contemplate any direction from London that questioned Canadian "independence."⁵⁷ Where Canadian naval vessels were concerned Keith emphasized that any suggestion of imperial control would be purely "illusory" and even the "appearance" of such control would be highly "suspect" in Ottawa.⁵⁸

Arthur Berriedale Keith's acceptance of an autonomous defence role for Canada's armed forces was almost immediately endorsed by the Committee of Imperial Defence. Early in the new year the Committee received a report from a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Lord Hardinge suggesting the appropriate policies to be pursued regarding enemy and neutral shipping in wartime. The Hardinge sub-committee findings can only be described as a substantive endorsement of colonial passive belligerency in wartime.

It is desired at the outside to lay special stress on the fact that; although concurrence in the policy of His Majesty's Government involves executive action on the part of the Governments of the Dominions as regards the treatment of enemy and neutral shipping on the outbreak of war, it will not in any way restrict the freedom of these Governments to decide, when the occasion arises, whether their naval and military forces *shall or shall not participate in hostilities*.⁵⁹

The clear approval of Lord Hardinge's sub-committee of the right of the self-governing colonies to determine the degree to which they would or would not participate in British-directed wars was emphasized by the fact that its author had just completed a term of office as permanent Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office and would shortly assume his new duties as Viceroy to India. Despite the weight attached to Hardinge's office and the unmistakable findings of his committee, the report was subjected to a scathing denunciation by his successor as permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Arthur Nicholson, who was also a full-time member of the Committee of Imperial Defence.⁶⁰

Speaking critically of his predecessor's findings, and in what can almost be described as a form of intra-departmental rivalry, Nicholson argued that the "international status" of the self-governing Dominions

made any suggestion of their neutrality in wartime "out of the question." Each Dominion, he insisted, and he might just as well have said Canada, was an integral part of the Empire. Therefore, in international law, such communities had to bear the consequences of actions undertaken by "the Central Government." A British declaration of war, Sir Arthur argued, led inevitably "to every portion of the Empire" being open to attack by Britain's enemies.⁶¹

Arthur Nicolson's analysis of the contemporary Empire of 1911 was of course correct regarding the Dominions' status in time of war. A United Kingdom declaration of hostilities did indeed commit the self-governing colonies to a belligerent status. However, the permanent Under-Secretary had overlooked the Laurier administration's determination to emphasize a status of passive belligerency as opposed to the role of active participant, at least where Canada was concerned in British-directed wars. This difference came to be accepted reluctantly by many of Arthur Nicolson's professional and political colleagues in contemporary London, as indeed it had already been endorsed by his predecessor at the Foreign Office, Lord Hardinge of Penhurst.

Upon arrival in London to attend the 1911 sessions of the Imperial Conference, Laurier went out of the way to persuade his British colleagues of Ottawa's insistence on Canadian choice regarding participation in imperial wars. Invited to attend the sessions of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the Prime Minister pointed out that Committee members laboured under the illusion that Canada's naval vessels, yet to be constructed, were part of the Royal Navy during peacetime and would participate in British wars unless specifically removed by the Canadian Parliament. He immediately proceeded to disabuse his colleagues of this misconception.

Referring to the Canadian Naval Service Act, Sir Wilfrid emphasized that the navy came under Ottawa's control with the proviso that it *might* be placed under Admiralty control in wartime but only with parliamentary approval. Turning to what he described as a rising spirit of jingoism in Britain, Laurier took note of a "school of thought" which argued that the Dominion must "take part in all the wars" in which the mother country was involved. Canada, he insisted, took "a very different attitude." In defending the autonomy of his country's armed forces, Laurier seized upon the comments of his fellow Prime Minister, New Zealand's Sir Joseph Ward. Sir Joseph had argued:

I want to impress the fact that the Empire cannot be at war and Canada at peace at the same time. Any war to which the statesmen of the United Kingdom commit the Empire, involves Canada as well as New Zealand

and all other portions of the Empire, and from the point of view of international law is as much part of the Empire as England.

Laurier agreed that Ward's comments were "logical." However, he noted that the Empire's development had not been "altogether characterized by logic" and that British and colonial statesmen had "always endeavoured" to solve contentious problems by "practical" rather than "logical" means. Thus, when the Empire was at war Canada was certainly not "at peace" though in actual practice the country might well be "absolutely at peace."

To substantiate his argument that Canada could indeed opt for a status of passive belligerency during a period when the Empire was at war, Laurier referred to the Crimean war when his country took no part in the conflict. Indeed, Canada was "just as much at peace" as if she "had never been a British colony." Laurier gave added emphasis to his theme of passive belligerency with reference to the Napoleonic wars. As he analyzed the period from 1796 to 1815, Canada was "as much at peace" as if "annexed to the United States." The Prime Minister's analysis and conclusions were obvious. Great Britain could indeed be engaged in hostilities while her Canadian dependency, though a co-belligerent, remained "practically at peace."⁶²

Although Laurier had staunchly endorsed a status of passive belligerency for Canada, with sovereign control over the nation's armed forces, the acceptance or rejection of his stand still depended very much on the opinions and policies of the Admiralty, the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office. In this context it must be emphasized that opinion in Whitehall remained somewhat divided, with Arthur Nicolson vigorously defending imperial primacy while his Colonial Office colleagues were joined by the Admiralty in their toleration of Canadian aggressiveness. Nicolson's own adamant opinions had been subjected to considerable qualification by his predecessor as permanent Under-Secretary, Lord Hardinge.

As early as March 24, 1911, Reginald McKenna admitted to his colleagues on the Committee of Imperial Defence that no agreement had been reached with Ottawa regarding use of the embryonic Canadian fleet. Australia, on the other hand, had agreed that once Australian naval vessels had been placed at the disposal of the Admiralty, Canberra could not withdraw them while a war lasted. Needless to say, McKenna's reference to Ottawa's lack of action was vigorously criticized by Arthur Nicolson. According to Nicolson, if the United Kingdom was in a state of war so too were the Dominions. For a Dominion to proclaim its neutrality was in effect to announce its secession from the British Empire! Nicolson, of course, was ignoring once more

whether inadvertently or not the substantive difference between a Canadian declaration of neutrality and a policy of passive belligerency.

Reginald McKenna disagreed with his Foreign Office colleague. He noted that on the outbreak of war London would immediately cable colonial governments ordering them to take "definite hostile action" against enemy shipping. As the First Lord of the Admiralty assessed the scenario, however, the colonial governments might assume that the enemy was not prepared to attack them, which could well be the case. Thus, Ottawa would argue, it was up to the colonial administration concerned to decide whether or not the colony's armed forces should be directed against an enemy designated by the imperial government.⁶³

The Admiralty's sympathetic attitude was reciprocated by the Colonial Office. On the eve of the 1911 Conference, the Office received word from Louis Brodeur about the arrival of the former British Cruiser *Niobe*, which marked the beginnings of the Canadian Naval Service. Brodeur pointed out that the *Niobe's* arrival dramatized Canada's determination "to assume a part of the defence of her coasts and the adjoining trade routes." Brodeur's open reference to a purely Canadian role for the fleet was accepted by resigned Colonial Office personnel as very much a fact of early twentieth-century Anglo-Canadian relations.⁶⁴

In a subsequent analysis of Ottawa's promotion of Canadian defence autonomy, the Colonial Office pointed out that London's control over foreign policy might well involve the Empire in a war with Germany or Greece "against the will" or to the "complete indifference of Canada." Given Whitehall's suzerainty in the realm of foreign affairs, Hartman Just argued that London would be "at least in part directly responsible" for any future conflict that might arise between Canada and the United States. In terms that set him apart from Arthur Nicolson, Just praised Wilfrid Laurier's doctrine of passive belligerency as being based on "both logic and common sense." Canada, Just insisted, had "the freedom" to "stand aside" from any British war of which Ottawa disapproved or to which Canadians were "indifferent." If Whitehall denied Canadian arguments on this issue—and Just might as well have named Arthur Nicolson—then Canada could be called upon to "spend blood and money" by a cabinet that did not represent "one of her taxpayers." In this event, he concluded sombrely, the "old question" which had led to "the independence of the U.S.A." would once again arise.⁶⁵

The entire issue of colonial control over naval forces, at least where Canada was concerned, was definitely settled on June 29, 1911, at a meeting at the Admiralty. Canada was represented by Louis Brodeur. During discussions regarding the applicability of the Naval Discipline

Act to Dominion forces, Brodeur made it quite clear that Ottawa would legislate "independently" of Westminster. As he viewed proposed Admiralty amendments to the existing statutes, they seemed to imply a right "to legislate for the Dominions." Indicative of Brodeur's determination to emphasize Canadian control was his emphasis on distinctions where the uniforms of the naval forces were concerned. The buttons on Canadian uniforms, he informed his colleagues, would feature the maple leaf rather than the laurel leaf of the Royal Navy.

Turning to the issue of Dominion naval units meeting vessels of the Royal Navy the delegates agreed that the senior officer present would have "the right of command" where matters of "ceremony or international intercourse, or where united action were agreed upon." Significantly, the conference emphasized that the senior officer, who could only be a member of the Royal Navy during the period under review, would have no power to direct the movements of the ships of "the other service" unless the vessels concerned had been so ordered by prior "mutual agreement."

A gesture towards the concept of imperial unity was contained in the agreement that Dominion fleet units placed at the disposal of the Admiralty would form "an integral part" of the Royal Navy and would remain under "the control" of the Sea Lords during "the continuance" of any war. However, even this reference to Admiralty control was qualified by the admission that such control would come about only when the naval service of a Dominion had been "put at the disposal of the Imperial Government by the Dominion authorities" concerned.⁶⁶

The conclusion of the decade-long campaign for United Kingdom recognition of Canadian defence autonomy came during the actual sessions of the 1911 Imperial Conference. Though the Conference did not unduly emphasize the defence problems and needs of the Empire, it did in effect endorse Wilfrid Laurier's distinction between a status of active and passive belligerency and basically accepted Louis Brodeur's initiatives at the June 29 Admiralty meetings. In a significant paper tabled at the Conference the imperial government recognized categorically that the "naval forces and services" of Canada and Australia would remain "*exclusively* under the control of their respective Governments." The imperial government also noted that the Dominion naval units placed at the disposal of the Admiralty during time of war would remain under Admiralty control during the hostilities in question. However, such forces would only come under British command when they had been made available "*by the Dominion authorities*" concerned.⁶⁷

Wilfrid Laurier, of course, would never assert Canada's complete control over the still-to-be established navy nor the country's other

armed forces. He and his Liberal administration were defeated by Robert Borden's Conservatives in the general election of September, 1911. Nonetheless, Laurier and his successive administrations had gained recognition from London of Ottawa's right to control the country's armed forces, and to implement if necessary a status of passive belligerency where Britain's involvement in hostilities was concerned. One need only recall the comments of such prominent imperial and political personalities as Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Minto, Earl Grey, the Marquis of Crewe, Reginald McKenna and Herbert Asquith to emphasize the fact that Whitehall had surrendered substantial control over her errant dependency's armed forces. Of equal significance was the fact that career professionals in Whitehall such as Hartman Just, Arthur Berriedale Keith and Lord Hardinge recognized and accepted the reality of Canadian defence autonomy. This autonomy was reiterated though in a somewhat different fashion by the new administration.

Convinced that the Empire was facing a crisis over naval strength, the new administration suspended Laurier's Naval Service Act and made preparations for a financial grant to Whitehall to enable the Admiralty to begin the construction of Canadian financed vessels. On this issue, as has been well documented, Robert Borden was determined that monetary aid from Canada be accompanied by a voice for Ottawa in determining imperial foreign policy.⁶⁸ The *Ottawa Citizen* reported that a Member of the British Commons had urged the administration to "assure Canadians" that "the Admiralty wanted their co-operation and would give them some representation."⁶⁹ The Governor-General, Arthur, Duke of Connaught, informed Whitehall that the *Ottawa Citizen's* report had received the approval of Borden and reflected his administration's policy.⁷⁰

According to Hartman Just, undersecretary for the Dominions Division within the Office, Borden's initiatives went far beyond "technical" consultations with the Admiralty. The new Conservative administration was demanding to know where Canada stood "within the Empire" as well as insisting upon "a greater voice in the Councils of Empire." Robert Borden was demanding a "share in the Foreign Policy of the Empire," a demand that went far beyond "representation on the board controlling the navy." The Dominions under-secretary emphasized that such a policy could lead to a "division of control in imperial efficiency." It was inconceivable that representatives of a Dominion "responsible to another Parliament" should sit on "a board" responsible to parliament at Westminster. This, he argued, would create "division and weakness" throughout the Empire.⁷¹

The Colonial Secretary, Lewis Harcourt, agreed wholeheartedly with his Dominion's under-secretary. From the Colonial Secretary's viewpoint there was little to choose between the new Conservative administration and the Laurier Liberals.⁷² On the issue of financial aid from Ottawa for imperial naval purposes, Borden argued that a more prominent Canadian role in Whitehall as well as the construction of the fleet units concerned in Canada would overcome "local prejudice" to his proposed expenditures.⁷³ The Prime Minister was replied to in what can only be described as an arrogant and patronising manner by the newly appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. Churchill viewed the major obstacle to Borden's proposals to lie in Canada's lack of a "high degree of technical knowledge and experience" that was required for the "efficient construction" of modern naval vessels.⁷⁴

While Robert Borden's naval bill made its labourious and contentious way through the Commons yet another aspect of his emerging nationalism became evident. The fleet units financed by Canada could, he insisted, be recalled by the administration in Ottawa.⁷⁵ Sentiments of this nature hardly sat well with the Colonial Office. Lewis Harcourt argued that Borden's proposals lacked precision. Did the Prime Minister mean that the Canadian financed vessels would be withdrawn from the Royal Navy after "sufficient notice" had been given in order to permit their replacement by new construction in a "vital *theatre*?" Harcourt emphasized that if the fleet units subsidized by Ottawa were "suddenly withdrawn," the results would be most "undesirable."⁷⁶

Though Robert Borden's naval bill cleared the Commons on May 15, 1913, by a majority of 33 votes, it was rejected at the end of that month by the Liberal dominated Senate.⁷⁷ The Senate had clearly turned down what the Colonial Office regarded as "technically" a money bill. Regardless of the Senate's action on the very eve of World War I it was clear that over a period of two years Robert Borden and his administration had attempted to utilize the naval issue as a means of both advancing Canada's role where the Empire's foreign policy was concerned and as a significant step towards Ottawa's eventual control over the nation's external relations.

When Canada declared war on Germany on September 10, 1939, a full week after similar declarations by France and Britain, Ottawa had asserted to the full the nation's genuine independence and control over its armed forces. Speaking in support of the resolution calling for the declaration of hostilities, the Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, emphasized to the Commons that Canada's declaration was being introduced "voluntarily" and not because of "any colonial or

inferior status vis-à-vis Great Britain." Canada, he insisted, was "a nation in the fullest sense" and thus the country was prepared to enter the current conflagration "voluntarily and of its own decision and right."⁷⁸ The Prime Minister's comments on the eve of World War II were a suitable endorsement of Canadian independence but equally they stood as an appropriate testimonial to not only his own endeavours of 1910 and 1911 but particularly to those of his political mentor, Wilfrid Laurier, who had emphasized that it was up to Canada "which created the navy, to say when and where it shall go to war."⁷⁹ It is reasonable to conclude that Robert Borden, had he lived to witness the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, would have agreed with his former Liberal adversaries.

NOTES

1. Laurier to Chamberlain, Ottawa, undated, Ottawa, *Laurier Papers*, Vol. CLXXXIII, Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), Ottawa. Hereafter cited as *Laurier Papers*.
2. Donald C. Gordon, *The Dominion Partnership In Imperial Defence* (Baltimore, 1965), p. 155.
3. Denison to Sir Robert Pollock, Toronto, February 1, 1902, *Denison Papers*, Vol. X, Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), Ottawa. Hereafter cited as *Denison Papers*.
4. *Ibid.*, Denison to Chamberlain, Toronto, February 22, 1902.
5. Minto to Peter Elliott, Ottawa, November 30, 1901, *Minto Papers*, Vol. XXXVI, Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), Ottawa. Hereafter cited as *Minto Papers*.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. II. Résumé by Minto of a conversation with Laurier, March 19, 1902.
7. Minutes of February 19, 1902, Colonial Office Records, Series 323/473, general correspondence, Public Record Office, London.
8. For an assessment of the impact of United States tariff legislation on Canada see, R.A. Shields, "Imperial Reaction to the Fielding Tariff of 1897," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, November, 1965, pp. 524-537.
9. *Hansard*, 4th series, Commons, March 4, 1902, Vol. CIV, col. 399.
10. For an excellent analysis of prevailing opinion in the Admiralty and the War Office see Leopold Amery, *Chamberlain* (London, 1951), pp. 415-424.
11. Borden to Laurier, Private, London, July 2, 1902, *Laurier Papers*, Vol. CCXXXVII.
12. See "Memorandum by the Canadian Ministers concerning Defence," *British Cabinet Papers*, series CAB18/10, 1902, p. 73, Public Record Office, London.
13. Tupper to Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, Ottawa, January 3, 1903, *Tupper Papers*, Vol. XII, Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), Ottawa. Hereafter cited as *Tupper Papers*.
14. Minto to Peter Elliot, Private, Ottawa, March 1, 1903, *Minto Papers*, Vol. XXXVI. Italics Minto's.
15. J. Kettle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conference, 1887-1911* (London, 1967), pp. 51-52.
16. Chamberlain to Denison, Private, London, April 6, 1903, *Denison Papers*, Vol. II.
17. Memo by Minto, Secret, December 27, 1904, "Transfer of the Defences of Halifax to the Canadian Government," No. 17c, *Committee of Imperial Defence*, Series CAB 38/125, Public Record Office, London. Hereafter cited as CAB 38.
18. A retired officer of the Royal Marine Artillery, Colomb became prominent in the eighteenth-seventies preaching the doctrine of a powerful navy with supporting bases as a necessity for the United Kingdom in a hostile and rearming world. His earnest advocacy of this cause earned him the reputation of having been the apostle if not the originator of the "Blue Water School." Throughout the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras and especially after his election to the House of Commons in 1886, Colomb pursued the goal of colonial contributions for imperial defence until his death in 1909.
19. Grey to Laurier, Private, Ottawa, January 5, 1905, *Laurier Papers*, Vol. MCCLIII.

20. Just, who had served as a Principal Clerk in the Colonial Office from 1897 to 1907, was appointed in the latter year as the under-secretary responsible for the Dominions Division within the Office.
21. Minutes of February 14, 1907, Colonial Office Records, Series C.O. 532/2, Dominions, original correspondence, Public Record Office, London. Hereafter cited as C.O. 532.
22. Kende, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-96.
23. Côte to Laurier, cable, Montréal, April 18, 1907, *Laurier Papers*. Vol. CMLXI. Côte served as managing editor of *La Presse* from 1904 to 1909. He was described as "a Liberal all his life," *The Canadian Men and Woman of the Time*, ed. Henry James (Toronto, 1912), p. 262.
24. *Ibid.*, Laurier to Côte, London, April 19, 1907.
25. Grey to Crewe (Colonial Secretary), Secret, Ottawa, May 16, 1909, C.O. 532/12.
26. *Ibid.*, Grey to Crewe, Secret, Ottawa, May 11, 1909.
27. C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict 1867-1921*, Vol. I (Toronto, 1977), p. 131.
28. *Ibid.*, Minutes of February 19 & 24, 1909.
29. *Ibid.*, Minutes of May 20, 1909.
30. Canada, *Debates*, Commons, Vol. II, May 12, 1902, col. 4726.
31. Willison served as editor-in-chief of the *Toronto Globe* from 1890 to 1902 and from 1902 to 1910 as editor of the *Toronto News*. In the latter year he became Canadian correspondent for the *Times*. He has been described as "a Liberal up to 1902" though subsequent to that date he became "more and more an exponent of the Conservative view in politics." James, *op. cit.*, p. 713.
32. Grey to Bryce, Ottawa, June 2, 1909, *Grey Papers*, Vol. IX, Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), Ottawa.
33. See Report by King of an interview with Grey, Ottawa, May 17, 1909, *King Diaries*, p. 2227, Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), Ottawa. Hereafter cited at *King Diaries*.
34. Brodeur to Laurier, London, August 10, 1909, *Laurier Papers*, Vol. MLXXXVI.
35. *Ibid.*
36. CAB 38/15, No. 15, Minutes of 104th meeting, August 19, 1909. Italics added.
37. *King's Diaries*, October 19, 1909, pp. 2237-2238.
38. *Ibid.*, October 30, 1909, p. 2245.
39. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1909, p. 2259.
40. *Revised Statutes of Canada*, C.43, 9-10 Edward VII, Vols. I-II, p. 5. Italics added.
41. Canada, *Debates*, Commons, February 3, 1910, col. 2965.
42. See the *Montreal Star*, January 21, 1910.
43. Robert Rumilly, *Henri Bourassa* (Montreal, 1953), p. 358.
44. Monk, who was of both anglophone and francophone heritage, was first elected to the Commons in 1900 for the Montreal constituency of Jacques Cartier. Over the period 1901 to 1903 he served as the Conservatives' opposition leader for the provinces of Québec.
45. Canada, *Debates*, Commons, Vol. I, March 8, 1910.
46. See editorial of June 22, 1910.
47. See Whitney's speech of March 31, 1909, as reported in the *Mail and Empire* (Toronto), April 1, 1909.
48. See Leacock's article, "The Naval Crisis in the Empire," *The Ottawa Citizen*, April 12, 1909.
49. Minutes by A.B. Keith, April 27, 1909. Colonial Office Records, Series C.O. 42/929, Canada, original correspondence, Public Record Office, London. Hereafter cited as C.O. 42.
50. See McNeil's speech reported in *The Toronto News*, May 6, 1909.
51. Tupper to Sir Hugh Graham, London, December 18, 1909, *Tupper Papers*, Vol. XIV.
52. *Ibid.*, Tupper to M.E. Nichols, London, December 23, 1909.
53. For a report on Borden's speech see *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 2, 1909.
54. Minutes by Hartman Just, January 25, 1910, C.O. 42/937.
55. Minutes by J. Dale, November 26, 1910, C.O. 42/931.
56. Rumilly, *op. cit.*, p. 389.
57. Keith, who served in the Colonial Office from 1901 to 1914, was undoubtedly influenced in a later career by his exposure to Canadian assertiveness and nationalism on such issues as the treaty-making power and defence autonomy. While still at the Colonial Office he produced his major work, *Responsible Government in the Dominions* (1909), while later he published such studies as *Imperial Unity and the Dominions* (1916), *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions* (1929), and *The Dominions as Sovereign States* (1938).
58. Minutes of November 17, 1910, C.O. 532/18.
59. CAB 38/17, Paper No. 124-B, Secret, February 21, 1911. Italics the author's.
60. Sir Arthur Nicholson entered the Foreign Office in 1870 and became Lord Granville's private secretary in 1872. He was appointed third secretary to the Berlin embassy in 1874, to

- Peking in 1878 and as second secretary to Constantinople in 1879. He subsequently served in Athens, Teheran, Sofia and Tangier and was appointed ambassador in Madrid in 1904. Nicholson became permanent under-secretary to the Foreign Office in 1910.
61. CAB 38/17, No. 12, February 24, 1911.
 62. CAB 38/18, Secret, Minutes of 112th meeting, May 29, 1911.
 63. CAB 38/16, Minutes of 109th meeting, March 24, 1911.
 64. Brodeur to Grey, Ottawa, January 24, 1911, C.O. 42/946. Italics the Colonial Office.
 65. Minutes of July 2, 1911, C.O. 532/31.
 66. "Memorandum of Conference Between The British Admiralty And Representatives Of the Dominions of Australia And Canada," June 29, 1911, Foreign Office Records, Series F.O. 371/285, General correspondence, political, Public Record Office, London.
 67. *Parliamentary Paper*, Great Britain, "Papers Laid Before the Imperial Conference," [C. 5746.2], H.C., (1911), LIV, pp. 561-562. Italics added.
 68. R.C. Brown, *Robert Laird Borden. A Biography*, Vol. I (Toronto, 1975), p. 236.
 69. See issue of March 19, 1912.
 70. Connaught to Harcourt, Confidential, Ottawa, March 19, 1912, C.O. 42/958.
 71. *Ibid.*, Minutes of April 4, 1912.
 72. *Ibid.*
 73. Borden to Churchill, Confidential, Ottawa, October 3, 1912, C.O. 42/961.
 74. *Ibid.*, Churchill to Borden, London, November 4, 1912.
 75. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
 76. Harcourt to Connaught, London, November 6, 1912, C.O. 42/961. Italics Harcourt's.
 77. It is interesting to note that the Colonial Office regarded the naval legislation as "clearly" a money bill. Hartman Just observed that the power of the Senate to "touch money bills" was "not defined" in the British North America Act. He noted that only recently the Senate had refused to accept a bill providing for grants for road construction and had taken the "high ground" regarding its "rights." See his minutes of December 26, 1912, C.O. 42/961.
 78. Canada, *Debates*, Commons, September 8, 1939, Vol. V, col. 30.
 79. *Ibid.*, February 3, 1910, Vol. II, col. 2964.