

as a whole. With respect to Lausanne, the Canadian Government maintained that as Canada had not participated in the negotiation of the Treaty, and was not a signatory to it, Parliament ought not to be asked to approve it.

The Prime Minister stated in Parliament (Can. H. of C. Debates, June 9, 1924, p. 2936):—

“I believe that the future of this Dominion will be happiest and best, most prosperous, and in every way most to the good, if its development is . . . towards a fuller recognition of national status within the community of free nations which comprise the British Empire; and it is because I hold that view, it is because I believe in it so strongly, that, in this particular matter, I have been prepared to risk whatever in the way of misunderstanding and criticism and censure might come from those who have not had a full knowledge or appreciation of the significance of the facts. I have been taking my stand from the point of view of Canada a nation within the British Empire, not Canada a colony, not Canada in any inferior or subordinate position, but Canada a country which has gained and which merits equality of status with other Dominions and with the Mother Country in these inter-Imperial relations.”

Power to Negotiate Treaties.—The right of Canada to negotiate treaties with foreign countries has developed steadily almost from the time of Confederation. At that time the accepted constitutional principle was that all treaties with foreign countries were negotiated by the British Government and automatically applied to Canada as well as to all other parts of the British Empire. Separate treaties might, however, be negotiated by the Imperial Government on behalf of particular parts of the Empire, as in the case of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 with the United States which applied only to British North American colonies. In 1871 an important step was taken in associating Canada in the negotiation of an imperial treaty, which directly involved Canadian interests, by the appointment of the Prime Minister of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald, as one of the British Commissioners to the conference that resulted in the Treaty of Washington. In 1874, Honourable George Brown was associated with the British Minister at Washington for the purpose of negotiating a commercial treaty between Canada and the United States. In 1878, Sir A. T. Galt, later High Commissioner, was sent on a special mission to undertake negotiations for commercial arrangement with France and Spain, but these negotiations were to be conducted formally by the British Ambassador. In 1884 the High Commissioner for Canada, Sir Charles Tupper, was given full powers to conduct negotiations for a commercial treaty with Spain in conjunction with the British Ambassador, the convention to be signed by both plenipotentiaries. In 1897, at the insistence of Canada, the British Government repudiated commercial treaties with Germany and Belgium in so far as they applied to Canada. In 1907 a commercial treaty with France was negotiated entirely by the Canadian representatives, Mr. Fielding and Mr. Brodeur, the British official signing as a mere formality. In 1911 negotiations for reciprocity with the United States were carried on directly between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States without the formality of appointing Canadian representatives as plenipotentiaries, although the agreement reached was in reality an inter-governmental agreement rather than a formal treaty.

While it was thus established prior to the War of 1914-18 that commercial and economic agreements affecting Canada should be negotiated by Canadian rather than by British representatives, the same progress had not been achieved with respect to political treaties. It was only after making strong representations that Canada was accorded the right to be represented in the negotiation of the peace treaties, and to sign and ratify them separately, plenipotentiaries in respect of Canada being appointed by the King on the advice of the Canadian Privy Council. Even then, the Treaty of Versailles and other treaties of peace agreed to at the Peace