

Secretary as the head of the Office, and a link between them and the Secretary of State. I hope that will be sufficient in order to make the change we now propose to introduce intelligible to your Lordships. What we propose to do is to divide the office into three Departments instead of into four. The first of these Departments we propose to term the Dominions Department. It will deal exclusively or practically so with the self-governing Dominions beyond the seas. The only work outside the business of those Dominions would be that originating in certain Protectorates or Possessions which are geographically or otherwise connected with the Dominions. I may mention as instances in point, at this present moment, the Protectorates in South Africa under the charge of the High Commissioner, and the islands of the Pacific. The other Departments do not, of course, come directly under the question of the noble Lord, and so I shall not deal with them in any detail, but I may mention that we propose to term the second Department the Colonial Department. It will, of course, deal with the Crown Colonies, and it will be a very heavy Department on account of the immense amount of administrative work and control involved in the management of the many Crown Colonies and Possessions of the Crown, and the ever-increasing importance and value that attaches to them. The third Department will be called the General Department. It will deal with the legal, financial, and other general business of the Office, and I may mention that under this Department we propose to establish a new feature in the shape of certain Standing Committees to take a collective view of such matters as contracts, concessions, mineral and other leases which come to us from all parts of the world, and also the matter of patronage, which is one of considerable importance and delicacy in the Colonial Office. This is the arrangement of the business of the Office which we propose to introduce, stated in general terms. I shall not trouble the House with any details, but I will just simply say, to prevent any misunderstanding, that we are not dealing only with the superior officers, but we are working out a reorganisation throughout with all the necessary divisions and sub-divisions.

I proceed to the other branch of the subject, which is the personnel, and I propose to place at the head of the Dominions Department the senior assistant Under-Secretary of State. Mr. Lucas is a gentleman of very high academical and literary distinction, who has managed, even amongst the preoccupations of his official duties, to find time for works of merit on Colonial and especially Canadian history. He has had a long experience of Colonial administration and his attractive and sympathetic personality has made him many friends in every quarter. I am certain that the task of recommending this new Department to our brethren beyond the seas can safely be entrusted to him. Second to this appointment and probably one which will attract even more interest is the nomination of the Secretary to the Conference. I have already quoted what I said to the Conference in regard to this matter. My promise was to take from our own staff a gentleman for the special duties arising out of the work of the Conference connected with what had passed and leading up to the future. I say at once that this post ought to be filled by a man of proved ability, of wide experience, and of a standing which will justify him in having access, whenever necessary, direct to the Secretary of State. I am glad to say that I can secure at once continuity from Conference to Conference. I feel that I am able to promote to this new post the gentleman who occupied the position of Joint-Secretary to the late Conference. Mr. Just has an experience of Colonial affairs which is second to none, and a special knowledge of South African business, having visited the country himself when the Secretary of State of the time paid a visit to it. He has an unsurpassed capacity for work, and the Papers which he prepared for the last Conference were never mentioned without its members expressing their appreciation. He holds the rank of Assistant Under-Secretary, and I claim that in appointing him to this post I am appointing a man of experience, of merit, and of position which ought to secure for it the esteem which its best friends desire. I will not go further to-night; I will not mention other members of the staff by name, but I will only just observe that I feel I shall be able to find men in our Service who have visited the self-governing Colonies, and I shall be only too glad to profit by their experience.

I think it right to make one remark as to a very unfair prejudice which is sometimes excited by semi-contemptuous references to Colonial Office Clerks. That is an expression calculated to mislead, but I am sure it will not mislead in this House. It is well known by all who care to know that the higher ranks in the Public Service of this country are filled by members of the great Civil Service of which this country is proud, and from which the requirements of India, as well as of England, are met by the same examination and from the same lists. The gentlemen in the Colonial Office have passed the severest educational tests, many of them possess University distinctions, and they are men who have ungrudgingly devoted the best years of their life to work which no doubt has moments of great interest and excitement, but which is, after all, apt to be monotonous and is certainly arduous, unceasing, and responsible beyond that of most men. I would only remark that that career is open to all subjects of His Majesty, and is open to our brethren beyond the seas if they choose to qualify themselves for it, and, as I ventured to say in the Conference, possibly under the influence of the Rhodes Scholarships more Colonials will enter our ranks. We shall be only too happy to give them a welcome. I would only say just one word in conclusion. I have pointed out that it was the decision of the Conference itself which limited me definitely to the line of advance which I have pursued. I maintain that I have carried out my mandate fully and without reserve, and though I am not without sympathy with those who think that there are more advanced posts that might be occupied at some future time, I venture to say that we have at the present moment taken possession of the most advanced post which we can safely occupy. After all, representative institutions are the truest defences of our liberties, and we must make the machinery of government conform to the requirements of the representative institutions which we possess. I think I have now given the noble Lord all the information which at this time to-night it is reasonable to inflict upon the House.