



## IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

**Canadian Foreign Policy and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1909-2009**

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**NATIONAL IDENTITY,  
PUBLIC OPINION AND  
THE DEPARTMENT OF  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
1935-1939**

Heather Metcalfe

The anticipation simmered just below the surface of Quebec City on a fresh May morning in 1939. Crowds of Quebecers, leavened by a sprinkling of notables from elsewhere in Canada, focused their attention on the quay on the St. Lawrence. In the distance an ocean liner, the *Empress of Australia*, was heaving into sight. This was by itself nothing special: ocean liners were not strangers to the port; but today the *Empress* was carrying special guests. Royalty was coming to town, and not just any royalty – for Quebec had hosted princes and princesses before – but the reigning monarch of the British Empire, George VI, and his consort, Queen Elizabeth. This was a first, for no reigning British king or queen had ever visited Canada.

The royal tour of 1939 had been the focus of in-depth planning on the part of the Canadian government, and of the Canadian people, since the idea of the tour had been advanced by Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King at the Imperial Conference of 1937. As the yacht ferrying the king and queen made its way – majestically, in the eyes of the crowd – from the *Empress* to the quay, Quebec's citizens would be the first, as the Canadian

media reported, to have the honour of receiving Canada's king and queen – and the empire's too, of course. The Canadian papers could think of nothing better than to reprint the words of the London *Times*, which concluded that it “comes to them in a sense by geographical accident, but no province of the dominion can show better title than the right of seniority which belongs to the French-Canadians of Quebec.”<sup>1</sup> Certainly the crowds that swarmed the Quebec docks seemed to justify that faith.

Support for the monarchy notwithstanding, controversies over international policy erupted regularly in Canadian politics during the period leading up to the Second World War. Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and his French-Canadian “lieutenant” Ernest Lapointe responded carefully to these debates, conscious that Canadian involvement abroad would rouse strong currents of opinion at home that represented a danger to national unity, still fragile in the wake of the divisive clash over conscription during the First World War. They recognized that in any major war involving Britain, increasingly likely after the unfortunate Munich settlements of 1938, Canadian involvement was inevitable, given the strength of imperialist sentiment across the country. But participation, they feared, would likely generate an isolationist backlash from Quebec. As international relations became more dangerous in the late 1930s, the stakes for Canadians, particularly those concerned with Canadian public opinion, increased dramatically. As a result, King's key concern in the immediate run-up to the conflict was to ensure that Canada's entrance into the war do only minimal damage to the delicate state of Canadian unity. At best, it seemed that internal conflict could be managed, but not avoided.

Canadian foreign policy during the 1930s was important therefore not only for its international implications but also for its internal consequences. The decade's repeated European crises forced Canadians to ponder the question of what it meant to be “Canadian,” which differed along traditional religious, ethnic, and linguistic lines. As Canadian society split over these questions of identity, the result was an ongoing disagreement about the underlying nature of the country and its national interests. Aware that his government could not resolve these issues of policy and identity, King sought to paper over these disputes, postponing debate on international issues, and, by implication, discussions about the national identity. King

instead focused on domestic issues, insisting that his government would respond to international developments on a case-by-case basis.<sup>2</sup>

King's policy of political compromise for the sake of national unity was not universally popular and was questioned even within his own government. This was especially true within the ranks of the Department of External Affairs. While Canada's small band of young diplomats agreed with the emphasis that the prime minister placed on national unity and applauded his efforts to recognize the strength of isolationist sentiment in Quebec, many of their number, including the department's under-secretary, O.D. Skelton, thought that the government should go further in this direction. They were convinced that courting isolationist and non-interventionist sentiment would generate a more distinct national viewpoint, one that better reflected the national interest.

These views were reflected, for instance, in a memorandum by Hugh Keenleyside, one of Skelton's early protégés in External Affairs, on his passage through the Prairies on his way home to British Columbia during the Munich crisis of 1938. Of course, Canadians of British origins, he wrote Skelton, were "prominent in Canadian business and social life, and it is natural that [they] should be over-represented in our organs of opinion. In spite of a good many shocks during the recent years – and particularly since Mr. Chamberlain took office in Great Britain – this element in the population still seems in general to approve of the idea that 'When Britain is at war we all are at war.'"<sup>3</sup> But Keenleyside held out hope for the future. Not only had imperialist sentiment been shaken by international developments over the last few years, but this older group had failed to fully transmit these views to the younger generation.

The development of a more "progressive" view of Canadian foreign policy, Keenleyside argued, lay with the ethnic minorities in the Prairie provinces and with the younger elements of the population. These segments of Canadian society, he wrote, had increasingly come to the conclusion that the present "mess" in Europe was largely a result of British policy, and that it was not Canada's responsibility to "sacrifice another generation of Canadians to try to straighten it out.... So if Britain and the rest of Europe want to go to Hell let them go – but let us stay out of it and try to maintain some remnants of decency on this continent."<sup>4</sup> Cautiously optimistic, Keenleyside argued that, given the West's "racial" and generational composition, a

Canadian political party with a policy of Canadian autonomy would gain widespread support. With the right sales-pitch, which could be developed by drawing on the growing “expertise” of the Canadian intellectual community, the young diplomat thought that an autonomous platform might sway Quebec and parts of rural Ontario. “It would, of course, precipitate a bitter fight,” Keenleyside acknowledged, but hadn’t “the time for such a fight arrived? Or must we go through another World War first?”<sup>5</sup>

Keenleyside’s views found a ready echo in the East Block headquarters of the Department of External Affairs. Skelton too was concerned about the relationship between public opinion and Canadian interests. The under-secretary told his colleague Hume Wrong in March 1939 that Canadian involvement in any European war would likely be based “simply and solely on the grounds of racial sympathy with the United Kingdom.”<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, like Keenleyside, he remained hopeful that this imperialism might soon be the victim of its own success. “If the next year or so passes without a war,” he continued, “I have little doubt that the ripening of public opinion in the assumption of more national responsibility in questions of war as well as in questions of peace will continue at a more rapid pace than in the past ten years.” The implication was that this would mean a diminishing role for imperialist sentiment in the formation of Canadian policy. But, Skelton cautioned, this would not happen by itself. These changes would require Canadian intellectuals to engage public opinion and educate Canadians to “think boldly about Canada’s place in the world.”<sup>7</sup> While civil servants would not be directly involved in this exercise by virtue of their non-partisan standing, Skelton implied that External Affairs should encourage these developments. Serving the national interest for Skelton meant defining this interest, and, in particular, “educating” Canadians to think of their interests as extending beyond the imperial connection with Great Britain.

How this “education” might be accomplished was a difficult question. Public opinion and its influences are always notoriously difficult to quantify, and this was especially true of Canada in the 1930s, when there were no public opinion polls and the idea of public opinion itself was still relatively new and contested. Some of those Canadians interested in the possible role of public opinion in a democratic society embraced the ideas associated with the newest “yardstick” of public opinion, the Gallup Poll

developed by the Institute of Public Opinion (IPO). Though available only in the United States in the 1930s (Gallup came to Canada in 1941), IPO rhetoric reflected progressive views of contemporary democracy. Polls, George Gallup and his colleagues argued, would provide an immediate, consistent, and accurate measure of public views and would return democracy to “‘The People’ in an age of increasing corporate interests.”<sup>8</sup> Their voices could now finally be heard over those of “‘The Interests,’” who represented only the powerful few.<sup>9</sup>

But the rhetoric used so successfully by the IPO in the United States did not resonate as strongly in Canada. While populist ideas were present north of the border, they did not play the pivotal role they did in the American system. Canadian journalists, for instance, focused on the limitations of the new system, perhaps because they were traditionally considered, by themselves and others, as “‘bell-wethers” of public opinion. They showed little inclination to embrace the doctrine of *vox populi vox dei* and insisted that Canadians should embrace Britain’s “‘cautious reserve” *vis-à-vis* public opinion. As H.T. Stanner wrote in a *Canadian Business* piece in December 1941, all “‘too frequently it is found that large numbers of people have little or no specific knowledge of defence problems and consequently, are in no position to form a guiding opinion.”<sup>10</sup>

Canadian politicians argued in turn that the very philosophical foundation for the principle of polling contradicted the nature of Canadian society. Canadian democratic principles, based on the British parliamentary system, differed significantly from their American counterparts. Whereas proponents of the Gallup system heavily emphasized the role of populism, Canadian political leaders emphasized Parliament, the representatives of “‘the People,” as the source of democratic legitimacy. Cabinet minister C.G. “‘Chubby” Power, for example, reminded his colleagues in the House of Commons in 1939 that their primary duty was to the nation, rather than to their constituents at home “‘who know nothing of the question under discussion.” The same idea was also reflected in King’s governing principle that “‘Parliament will decide.”<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, King was especially sceptical of public opinion, which he understood in intuitive terms to represent a limit of his power. His views on public opinion are perhaps best seen in his diary recollections of a conversation he had with Conservative parliamentarian R.B. Hanson in December

1941. King, in response to Hanson's plea that he form a national government, outlined his detailed views on the nature of government:

Hanson said, at one stage, that with my large following I could do anything I wished. I replied to him that my views of the source of power were very different to those of some other men.... I said that such successes I had had, I believed, came from the fact that I believed my power came from the people; that it was not something that arose from some 'superman' power which I myself possessed; that I felt I had held that power by being true to the people and to the promises I had given to them. That they trusted me because they knew I would not break faith with respect to their own views and wishes.

Hanson then said: "Then you feel that you should not lead?" To which I replied: That is not the case. That I believed the people had a true instinct in most matters of government when left alone. That they were not swayed, as specially favoured individuals were, by personal interest, but rather by a sense of what best served the common good. That they recognized the truth when it was put before them, and that a leader can guide so long as kept to the right lines. I did not think it was a mark of leadership to try to make the people do what one wanted them to do.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the hesitations of journalists and politicians, there were many in Canada during the 1930s who were determined, not only to tackle the problematic question of how to measure popular opinion, but also how to influence it. For those in the Canadian government who wanted to play a role in shaping this opinion, which included some members of the Department of External Affairs, it seemed possible to exert some influence. As historian Ernest May has shown, a "foreign policy public" can play a significant role in shaping public views on international relations. Although only a relatively small segment of the public followed international events, this group played a disproportionate role in shaping the discussion of international relations. This was largely due, he claims, to their social status, the respect given them by their community, and their access to information not readily available. Quoting sociologist Edward A. Ross, May argued that every "editor,

politician, banker, capitalist, railroad president, employer, clergyman, or judge has a following with whom his opinion has weight. He, in turn, is likely to have *his* authorities. The anatomy of collective opinion ... form[s] a kind of intellectual feudal system.”<sup>13</sup>

The formation of a consensus was aided, according to May, by the economic and political interests shared by this elite.<sup>14</sup> In addition, although their predominance could be challenged, their position and access to information from overseas ensured that “the establishment could determine collectively the terms on which any foreign policy debate would be conducted.” This influence, however, was subject to limitation. As May argued, the foreign policy public could not radically change the terms of international involvement. Furthermore, given the fluid nature of public opinion, they “could know in advance only the extreme limits of what their constituency might approve or disapprove.”<sup>15</sup> They could not be sure, therefore, of how to significantly shift public opinion on international relations. Those attempts were further hindered by the technical problem involved in reporting international developments during the interwar period. Information on international events took time to cross the oceans to Canada, and wire services did not provide a great deal of copy on world events to Canadian newspapers.<sup>16</sup>

Notwithstanding these limitations, which were only barely understood at the time, younger Canadian policy-makers and intellectuals remained convinced that public opinion could be bent to their will, provided that it was given proper leadership. As diplomat Keenleyside wrote in his memoirs almost fifty years later,

It is perhaps true that internal stresses within Canada made an enlightened and more positive policy in foreign affairs impossible. But it is at least arguable that if the government had made any serious effort to give leadership in the interpretation of the international scene, the Canadian people, French-speaking and English-speaking alike, might have responded with the humanity and intelligence that marked many other aspects of Canadian life.<sup>17</sup>



While King refused to provide open leadership in shaping a debate on foreign policy, a new class of Canadian intellectuals were convinced that they had an important role to play in shaping public opinion. As historian Doug Owram has argued, English Canadian intellectuals in the 1930s, influenced by the tradition of progressive reform inherited from their predecessors and the socio-economic crisis of the depression, were increasingly tempted to play a role reforming the injustices in Canadian society. Echoing Skelton's comments to Wrong, they focused on their self-professed role of educating and shaping Canadian public opinion. They agreed with the overall sentiment that the "facts, if properly analyzed and properly interpreted, would point toward the proper policies and attitudes."<sup>18</sup> And they insisted that their training and expertise, in the social sciences in particular, made them uniquely qualified for this role. This assumption was reinforced by the assumptions of Canadian society, that the new challenges of the period required leadership from experts, whether self-educated or academically trained.<sup>19</sup> As Professor Bruce Kuklick has argued, the focus of intellectuals on public opinion reflected their belief that if politics were "rational," the appropriate course would be apparent.<sup>20</sup>

The efforts of intellectuals and policy-makers to mobilize public opinion in support of "rational" policy, however, were hampered by the peripheral role that they still occupied in Canadian society, the way public opinion was formed, and the rifts within the intellectual community itself. Nowhere were the divisions in Canadian society more apparent than in the country's intellectual society. This community was limited in size, in both English and French-Canada, and was often isolated, both from each other and from the larger Canadian community.

The English Canadian intellectual community was notable for its separateness, underlined by its distinctive educational achievements. In an overall population of less than 12 million, a university degree, which increasingly signalled membership in the intellectual community, was a relative rarity.<sup>21</sup> This was particularly the case in a society that had suffered greatly from the economic crisis of the decade. Indeed, the total number of university students formed only a tiny fraction of the community. Almost half of the Canadian population did not finish high school. In 1931, only 46 per cent of sixteen-year-old Canadians were in school.<sup>22</sup> In the 1935–36

academic year, Canada's universities and colleges granted 6,772 degrees. Of these, 786 were graduate degrees.<sup>23</sup>

This intellectual community, partially due to its small size, was extremely close-knit and insular. Members of the English Canadian intellectual community corresponded often, pursued projects in common, and socialized together. These connections started in school as many attended the same universities in Canada and were reinforced through graduate work at institutions abroad. The number of Canadians pursuing graduate degrees was so small that acquaintance was impossible to avoid.<sup>24</sup> Within the developing network of intellectuals, positions often overlapped in various societies such as the Canadian Clubs, the Canadian Radio League, and the Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

Individual members of this community were also very well connected with the global intellectual community. Due to their interest in international developments, the connections created by their educational experiences, and the quality of their scholarship, Canadian intellectuals connected with international streams of thought and leading global thinkers. This sense of international connection was in many ways utterly foreign to Canadians as a whole. Indeed, Owrarn concluded that their education and their university experiences "thus provided the elite with a sense of exclusivity and accomplishment that distinguished members from the public at large and from other groups involved in public affairs."<sup>25</sup>

French Canada's intellectual community occupied its own, equally fast, solitude. Though a parallel to Owrarn's study on the English Canadian intellectuals has not yet been published, certain themes are clear enough. Generally, the two main groups of intellectuals in Canada did not overlap, and the social and educational connections that bound each group together did not exist across them.<sup>26</sup> Even those intellectuals who attempted to bridge the gap were often uncomfortable with this relationship.<sup>27</sup> Cultural differences dividing the two groups were reinforced by the French Canadian's focus on different issues, reflecting their unique cultural and political concerns.<sup>28</sup>

Their main focus involved the viability of French Canadian society. Raised in an environment that stressed the values of family, church (almost all French Canadian intellectuals were Catholic), and rural life, they naturally concentrated on these themes in their own work. Those concerns

focused on the contamination of Quebec society by the increasingly influential forces of industrialization, urbanization, and modernism.<sup>29</sup> French Canadian society was in their view an organic structure that had allowed their culture to survive for centuries in a North America dominated by Anglo-Saxon and Protestant values.<sup>30</sup> French Canadian nationalists, including the members of the *Action Libérale Nationale*, the *Jeune-Canada* movement, and *L'Action nationale*, argued that the spread of modern influences, including the centralization of federal power, industrialization and, most insidiously, modern, especially American, culture, was eating away at their community from the inside.<sup>31</sup> They pushed for policies meant to deter these influences, policies of “re-Frenchification” and colonization, of “acheter-chez-nous” and the destruction of the “Trusts.”<sup>32</sup> These views, combined with a general sense of remoteness from international developments, encouraged a focus on domestic issues and regional views. European developments, when reported in the pages of Quebec newspapers, served to remind French Canadians that peace was precarious and implied that war threatened the establishment of a strong, autonomous French Canadian society.<sup>33</sup>

While Canadian intellectuals were thus inclined to hold themselves apart, Canadian society was just as inclined to hold them at arm’s length. Many influential members of Canadian society, for example, continued to view academics as removed from the everyday concerns of society. As historian Michael Horn has argued, members of the Canadian business community, in particular, often contended that academics should refrain from commenting on public issues unless they had something “useful” or “constructive” to contribute.<sup>34</sup> This sentiment, and the fact that those who spoke out were often subject to public abuse, only encouraged the firm conviction within academia that the intellectual community ought to be removed from the cares of the world.<sup>35</sup> While O’wram has argued that the academic community had become much more involved in public issues during the 1930s, particularly due to the social impact of the Great Depression, he, along with fellow historians Michael Horn and David Fransen, all agreed that Canadian academics had not yet achieved the prominent role in society that they would in later periods.<sup>36</sup>

There was one important exception; a small group of English Canadian intellectuals were able to connect in limited ways with the general public.

By the 1930s, their community increasingly included key members of the Canadian press, particularly, a group of young journalists clustered around editor John Dafoe and the Winnipeg *Free Press*. This included Grant Dexter, Max Freedman, and George Ferguson, who had long-standing connections with Vincent Massey, one of the leading power-brokers of the Liberal party.<sup>37</sup> These contacts were enhanced by those that Dexter and Dafoe forged with the intellectual community in Winnipeg, which included Roderick K. Finlayson, E.J. Tarr, and the Sanhedrin group. The Sanhedrin, whose name echoed the biblical description of an influential group of Jewish elders, provided a link between the intellectual community, notable journalists, and key members of the Liberal party.<sup>38</sup> As the intellectual community attempted to gain a greater share of influence in the shaping of policy during the Depression, it found in Dexter and Dafoe “allies who could use publicity and propaganda to encourage movement in new directions.”<sup>39</sup>

But this was a limited and potentially dangerous liaison. Those members of External Affairs, including Lester B. “Mike” Pearson, who were interested in “educating” Canadian opinion, were at times reprimanded for any suggestion of intimacy with those outside of the government. Pearson’s close association with Dexter, while both were stationed in London during the late 1930s, was of particular concern to Skelton and his political bosses.<sup>40</sup> Pearson eventually briefed Dexter almost daily during the Czech crisis in October of 1938, making him as informed, and certainly more up-to-date, than many officials in Canada.<sup>41</sup> Alarm at this kind of activity grew to the point that any publication by the *Free Press* of materials embarrassing to the government, particularly on foreign policy, led to increased scrutiny of Pearson. Thus, while the lines between the intellectual community and Canada’s civil service increasingly blurred in the late 1930s, there were clear limits on how far individuals like Pearson could engage Canadian opinion.

Despite their aspirations to shape public opinion, Canadian intellectuals enjoyed only limited or inconsistent influence and were often frustrated by the lack of impact their views had in shaping political discourse or public opinion.<sup>42</sup> Surprisingly, they rarely considered the implications should public opinion come to a consensus with which they disagreed. The Canadian reaction to the royal tour of King George VI and Queen

Elizabeth in the summer of 1939 represented the most obvious manifestation of this problem. Canadians flocked to see their majesties in huge numbers, sincere in their enthusiasm and, at least on the surface, loudly and resoundingly loyal to the crown and to the empire. As one editorial put it “there can be no doubt that the royal visit will have created in this country a personal appreciation of the throne of nation and empire as may go so far as to make for a new era in intra-British relationships.” It would also encourage a “greater sense of unity and purpose on the part of the Canadian people themselves.”<sup>43</sup> Even in Quebec and among the ethnic communities of the Prairies, the royal tour was met with massive crowds.<sup>44</sup>

King’s foreign policy, therefore, while far from emotionally satisfying (or even at times logically consistent), seemed to many contemporary observers to reflect the general sentiments of the majority of Canadians. In 1937, Escott Reid, not yet a member of the Department of External Affairs, had published a generally positive analysis of King’s foreign policy. The Liberal prime minister’s focus on national unity, relations with the United States and Britain, and the maintenance of Canadian autonomy in relations with the League of Nations and the British Empire seemed to represent the realities of Canada’s position, both politically and emotionally. While there were many questions that King’s foreign policy left unanswered, including international economic grievances and, more importantly, Canada’s position in response to a war involving the United States or Britain, Reid concluded that this policy of ambiguity was, in fact, an appropriate one:

If Mr. King were to give unambiguous answers to the seven questions he has left unanswered, he would raise a tremendous political storm in Canada. Parties would split. Passions would be aroused. The national unity of Canada would be subjected to severe strains. If war should break out, such a crisis will probably be inevitable.... A crisis now would settle the question, and as a result there would be no crisis of any importance when the war did break out.... In other words, a crisis today would be a ‘preventive’ crisis. But democracy and democratic statesmen hate both preventative wars and preventative crises.<sup>45</sup>

While historians today might share Reid's conclusions, those who wanted King to pursue a more proactive approach to shaping public opinion in the 1930s did not find these sentiments comforting. Certainly Skelton appeared disheartened by the trends of opinion during the lead up to Canada's declaration of war in September of 1939. His memorandum, entitled "Canada and the Polish War, A Personal Note," touched on the limitations inherent in Canada's involvement in a global empire.

The first casualty in this war has been Canada's claim to independent control of her own destinies. In spite of a quarter century of proclamation and achievement of equality and independent status, we have thus far been relegated to the role of a Crown colony. We are drifting into a war resulting, so far as the United Kingdom's part is concerned, from political and diplomatic actions initiated months ago without our knowledge or expectation. An Ottawa paper has gloated over the fact that the foreign policy of Canada is in the hands of the Prime Minister of Great Britain; it has not yet called attention to Inskip's sideshow, 'the Dominion Office as the Foreign Office of the British Empire.'<sup>46</sup>

The under-secretary was ultimately frustrated with the way in which Canadian opinion remained unable to overcome its imperialism and the government's unwillingness to act in shaping it.

The 1939 royal tour demonstrated both the continuing appeal of this imperialism and the impact of public opinion on government policy. The issue became increasingly important as the likelihood of Canadian involvement in a European conflict increased after the Munich agreements of October 1938. Pearson, for example, expressed his concerns regarding the long-term consequences of the royal visit on Canadian public opinion in his correspondence with Skelton.

I can't help feeling that all the outbursts of Royal and Imperial sentiment which the tour has evoked and which has naturally been reported here in fulsome terms will make it even more difficult for this country to understand the unsentimentally

nationalist basis of Canada's external policy. There is not much use in saying that the enthusiasm shown was to Their Majesties in their personal capacities as King and Queen of Canada. I am afraid 99 per cent of the people in this country are not so expert in constitutional subtleties as to be able to distinguish between patriotic outbursts for the King of Canada and patriotic outbursts for the Ruler of the British Empire.... In this respect, I feel personally that whereas the Royal Visit seems to have done so much good in many respects, in this respect, it does make even more complicated certain complicating features of Canada's imperial relationship.

His letter concludes wryly that from "reading the Canadian newspapers, I am sure I would be shot as a traitor on sight if I were ever rash enough to give expression to such views [on the negative aspects of Canadian imperialism] in the hearing of my intoxicated countrymen at the present time."<sup>47</sup>

Pearson's observations and the massive coverage of the royal tour provides a different, grimmer, perspective on the views of department officials regarding the potential of "educating" Canadians about their national interests. Canada entered the war on 10 September 1939 with overwhelming support from English Canada. There was also very little active resistance on the part of French Canadians or their representatives in the House of Commons, despite the expectations of both internal and external observers.<sup>48</sup> The *Globe and Mail*, although disappointed that the declaration had not immediately followed that of Britain, happily reported the unanimity of the result.<sup>49</sup>

Ian Rutherford, in his discussion of the public debate in the United States regarding the possibility of war with Iraq in 2003 concluded that the result "was not really dialogue, an exchange of views, but a series of clashing monologues.... The debate that occurred was mostly in the heads of the journalists and the citizens at the receiving end of all this propaganda."<sup>50</sup> The nature of Canadian public debate during the 1930s, as much as anything, brings this formulation clearly to mind. Canadians during the decade were largely uninterested in understanding divergent views, let alone their context. The historiography of public opinion, especially when contrasted to the views of contemporaries, encourages the conclusion that

public opinion shifted slowly in response to international developments that Canadians saw as challenging their longstanding, if underlying, interests. The fact that the conclusions they reached regarding this role represented their continuing embrace of a connection with both Britain and the United States *and* the maintenance of Canadian autonomy, did not reflect a failure to “think boldly.” Rather, it reflected their realization, whether they thought in those terms or not, that a continuation of these policies would best reflect their national self-interest.<sup>51</sup>



## NOTES

- 1 The *Times* article concluded that the “Canadians will see in George VI the very incarnation of those ideals which have made it possible for two nationalities to dwell ... within the confines of a harmonious state.” See “French-Canadian Honour Stressed,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 17 May 1939, 7, and “Le ‘Times’ de Londres et les Canadiens français,” *Le Devoir*, 17 May 1939, 3.
- 2 C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Relations*, vol. 2: *The Mackenzie King Era, 1921–1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 195. The fact that Parliament’s decision was a foregone decision, given the Liberal majority, does not limit the importance of the policy in limiting controversy.
- 3 H.L. Keenleyside, Memorandum to Skelton, 6 October 1938, Department of External Affairs Records (DEAR), vol. 715, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Skelton to Wrong, 2 March 1939, Hume Wrong Papers, vol. 3, LAC.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 George Gallup and Saul Rae, *The Pulse of Democracy: The Public Opinion Poll and How it Works* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940), 125.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 10 Daniel J. Robinson, *The Measure of Democracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 90.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 70.
- 12 W.L.M. King Diary, 9 December 1941, W.L.M. King Papers, LAC.
- 13 Ernest R. May, *American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay*, new ed. (Chicago: Imprint, 1991), 29.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 29.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 83.
- 16 May, *American Imperialism*, 37.
- 17 Hugh L. Keenleyside, *Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside*, vol. 1: *Hammer the Golden Day* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982), 505.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 154.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 122, 137.
- 20 Bruce Kuklick, *Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 4.
- 21 The *Canada Year Book* of 1938 estimates the population for 1937 at 11,720,000. Canada, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, *Canada Year Book*, 1938 (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1938), 155.
- 22 John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, *Canada 1922–1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985), 159.
- 23 *Canada Year Book*, 1938, 996–97.
- 24 The *Canada Year Book* for 1937 lists 1,645 students enrolled in Graduate Studies. Canada, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, *Canada Year Book*, 1937 (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1937), 977.
- 25 Doug Owrarn, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900–1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 147.
- 26 For a discussion of the educational experiences of French Canadian intellectuals, see John English’s biography of Trudeau, *Citizen of the World: The Life of Pierre Elliott Trudeau*, vol. 1: 1919–1968 (Toronto: A.A. Knopf Canada, 2006).
- 27 Owrarn, *Government Generation*, 147. They were also anxious concerning the political implications of too close of a connection, although it seems apparent that the connection was uncomfortable more for cultural rather than political reasons. David Lenarcic, *Where Angels Feared to Tread* (Ph.D diss., York University, 1990), 96.

- 28 An example of this is seen in the response of French Canadian society to the new political forces represented in the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and its intellectual core, the League for Social Reconstruction. As Horn has argued, the LSR simply failed to gain many proponents among the French Canadian community, due not only to organizational failures and lacklustre effort, but also due to divergent cultural influences. Michael Horn, *The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada, 1930–1942* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 58. The same is true of the French Canadian response to isolationist groups within English Canada. Unfortunately, there has been little work done in the area.
- 29 Esther Delisle, *The Traitor and the Jew: Anti-Semitism and Extremist Nationalism in Quebec from 1929 to 1939* (Montreal: R. Davies, 1993), 38. See also Ramsay Cook, *Quebec and the Uses of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), 91; and Conrad Black, *Duplessis* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), 106.
- 30 Delisle, *The Traitor and the Jew*, 41. See also Cook, *Quebec and the Uses of Nationalism*, 107.
- 31 Delisle, *The Traitor and the Jew*, 61. See also Everett Hughes, *French Canada in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), 127.
- 32 Delisle, *The Traitor and the Jew*, 95. See also Bernard Vigod, *Quebec before Duplessis: The Political Career of Louis-Alexandre Taschereau* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 173; English, *Trudeau*, 42; and Patricia Dirks, *The Failure of l'action liberale nationale* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 37.
- 33 Dominique Marquis, Un quotidien pour L'Eglise: *L'Action catholique, 1910–1940* (Montreal: Lemeac, 2004), 125. Marquis' discussion of the transformation of the French Canadian religious press, particularly *L'Action catholique*, allows her a means of discussing the role that the Catholic Church continued to play in Quebec society. She argued that *L'Action catholique* became much more of a mainstream journal by the 1930s, one that could compete with the major secular journals.
- 34 Horn, *The League for Social Reconstruction*, 196.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Owrap, *Government Generation*, 169; and David Fransen, "Unscrewing the unscrutable: The Rowell-Sirois Commission, the Ottawa bureaucracy and public finance reform, 1935–1941," PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1984, 462.
- 37 Grant Dexter, for example, shared similar generational experiences with many of the intellectuals on whom Owrap focuses, including participation in the Great War and a growing attachment to Canadian nationalism. He also shared a number of views with this group, as well as a shared sense of purpose. See Owrap, *Government Generation*, 185.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Patrick H. Brennan, *Reporting the Nation's Business: Press-Governmental Relations during the Liberal Years, 1935–1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 22.
- 41 Brennan, *Reporting the Nation's Business*, 25.
- 42 Arthur Lower, *My First Seventy-Five Years* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1967), 177, 179, 189, 195.
- 43 "Saskatchewan's Goodbye," *Regina Leader-Post*, 6 June 1939, 4.
- 44 For two examples among many, see "Apothéose Royale," *La Presse*, 19 May 1939, 6, for an overview of the arrival in Quebec, and "Crowds Jam Melville for Visit," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 5 June 1939, 20, for the stop at the small town of Melville, Saskatchewan, one of the highlights of the tour where tens of thousands of Canadians from the Prairies gathered to get their chance to see the royal couple.
- 45 Escott Reid, *Radical Mandarin: The Memoirs of Escott Reid*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 109.

- 46 "Canada and the Polish War, A Personal Note," Skelton Papers, vol. 5, LAC.
- 47 Lester B. Pearson to O.D. Skelton, 9 June 1939, Pearson Papers, vol. 14, LAC.
- 48 H.B. Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King*, vol. 3: *The Prism of Unity, 1932–1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 290. This included a large number of British officials. See Ritchie Ovendale, *'Appeasement' and the English-Speaking World. Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the Policy of 'Appeasement,' 1937–1939* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), 328.
- 49 *Globe and Mail*, 11 September 1939, 6.
- 50 Paul Rutherford, *Weapons of Mass Persuasion: Marketing the War against Iraq* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 24.
- 51 As C.P. Stacey points out, Canadians were acting in their own interests when they decided to go to war in 1939, even if they were not entirely aware of the ways in which they did so. See Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, vol. 2, 268–69.