

## Recent Studies in the History of Canadian External Affairs

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century, it is undeniably a nation-sized community rich in diversity and interest. The Ontario Historical Studies Series has come along at a time when thanks to changes in Ontarians' own view of themselves and the appearance of fine works like H. V. Nelles' *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines, and Hydro-Electric Power* (Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1974), and Margaret Prang's *Newton W. Rowell, Ontario Nationalist* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1975), a clear trend already exists towards a new vogue for Ontario history. Gone soon will be the image, too often deserved, that historians of Ontario were interested primarily in local studies or time long ago. There is nothing the matter with either pursuit, of course, and increasingly sophisticated work in both local history and pre-Confederation times will undoubtedly complement the new regional and modern trend. No one will be surprised if a lot of trash or near trash — certainly a good deal of trivia — is produced as the new Ontario history moves into the next stages of growth. But Peter Oliver's very welcome and worthwhile study of Howard Ferguson and his times is a harbinger of good things to come. Could it be that Ontario is about to *dominate* regional history in Canada, causing a new burden on our unity, especially at the meeting each June of the Canadian Historical Association?

R. T. CLIPPINGDALE

### Recent Studies in the History of Canadian External Affairs

To students in the developing field of Canadian external relations, new publications are most welcome. The literature is not overwhelming in volume or in quality and additions to it are gratifying, even if they only complement existing bibliography. For example, a new survey of the sort that presents foreign relations in the full round — not simply Canadian-American or simply imperial — is long overdue. It is to be hoped that C. P. Stacey's book, the first of two intended volumes, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian Policies*, Volume I, 1867 - 1921 (Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1977) will satisfy that need. The title of Professor Stacey's book is somewhat confusing. (One cannot be sure just what conflict or conflicts the author had in mind.) As the sub-title indicates, however, it is a study of Canada's foreign relations from the dawn of Confederation to the appearance of Mackenzie King. C. P. Stacey is a master craftsman, Canada's premier military historian, indeed one of the best regardless of the company he keeps. His first publication, *Canada and the British Army, 1847 - 1871*, was a model monograph; his little book, *Quebec 1759: The Siege and the Battle*, was a gem. He has written many other works and composed numerous essays, articles and addresses.

He is a manuscript-and-document man who marshals his material with conviction and good sense; his arguments are colorfully, cogently presented; his style has grace and good humour.

In *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Professor Stacey has moved on to new ground. His subject is diplomatic history, not military, and its range is so vast that the author's personal research was necessarily limited to such items as Canadian prime ministers' papers, the Governor-General's Numbered Files, Colonial Office files (the CO 42 series) on microfilm in Ottawa, the private papers of certain governors-general, the Debates, the *Globe*, and so forth. In addition, he has consulted available secondary sources: articles in scholarly journals, monographs, the biographies and reminiscences of prominent figures, even Ph.D. theses. Despite this inquiry, the author found himself critically dependent upon existing (and incomplete) bibliography in the field of Canadian diplomatic history and upon the limited variety of primary Canadian sources he could himself consult. There was — save for one unusual instance — no indication that the author ventured into American or British archives; and, unfortunately, many if not most of the secondary works upon which he relied did not use those depositories either. Nonetheless, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, together with its planned companion-piece, will supersede G. P. de T. Glazebrook's *A History of Canadian External Relations*, thereby becoming the "standard" work in the field. If so, Stacey's claim to "standard" class will rest chiefly upon those passages and sub-chapters which describe military events in considerable detail — the Russian expedition of 1918, the South African War, and so forth. It will also rest upon the author's Canadian-oriented but generally well balanced synthesis (with some original research and interpretations) of the historical literature concerning British-Canadian relations.

Robert Laird Borden is given, despite strong (and deserved) criticism of his pre-war naval policy, the leading role in the development of the commonwealth. And yet, although Professor Stacey portrays Sir Robert as positive architect of that mystical association — in contrast to Laurier's "negative" contributions — he is left with the uncomfortable fact that so many of Borden's accomplishments were short-lived — stage props in a wartime theatre. The reviewer wonders whether the wartime relationship established among Canada, the other dominions and Great Britain was not contrived to meet the political needs of prime ministers. Surely, too, no man seemingly so knowledgeable about constitutional law as Borden could ever square the concept of an Imperial War Cabinet with political realities. The name — as R. M. Dawson pointed out long ago — is a contradiction in terms. Thus the era, 1917 - 1921 (or 1912 - 1921), would seem a misfit in the movement of events; and when Mackenzie King first picks up the threads again, 1921 - 1923, he is re-weaving the garment that Laurier had started, the garment that would actually fit the body politic.

Some minor criticisms also arise from the author's views about diplomatic history. Like many Canadian scholars of his generation, Professor Stacey places Canadian foreign policy within the frame of the "North Atlantic Triangle", a conception too well popularized by John Bartlett Brebner in the mid-1940s. Geography and other factors fashioned a triangle of sorts but the diplomatic problems that thrived within it seemed almost always to be resolved on a normal, national basis. Self-interest, "enlightened" or benighted, would seem to have been the usual force actuating Ottawa, Washington and London. The reviewer also had the feeling that, while Stacey was striding down the corridors of Canadian history, he spent too much time commenting upon events instead of explaining them. A good example would be the Washington Treaty of 1871, which (as he has convincingly argued elsewhere) is a major diplomatic watershed in Anglo-Canadian-American relations, but he does not justify to the reader of this book why that is so.

Like all historians painting large canvasses, Professor Stacey exposes himself to criticism from historians working on smaller frames but in greater detail. To say that the Alaska boundary decision was "settled at the point of Theodore Roosevelt's pistol . . ." (p. 103) is most misleading. Those Canadian judges — Aylesworth and Jetté — were not exemplary men of the bench, superior to their American counterparts either in legal experience or in jurisprudence. They may well have been inferior. Surely they were as prejudiced and as committed as the Americans. To determine which side had the better arguments, more historians should read the cases themselves. The decision about the islands would then seem as unjust as Aylesworth claimed; but the American title to the headwaters — to Dyea and to Skagway — should appear clear and unencumbered. Uncle Sam takes a bit of an undeserved beating here and elsewhere in Stacey's book. He was the supposed villain at Washington in 1911, when Joseph Pope wrested such an extraordinary treaty from the seal-island-owning nations. Though the Americans had objected — and so, too, the British Ambassador — to the rather cavalier way in which Pope had set aside an existing Canadian-American treaty, they still aided Canada's cause. If Pope faced any villains at Washington, they were Japanese and Russian. The Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 did not arise from squabbles over irrigable boundary rivers in the West; their roots lie elsewhere — in Canadian-American difficulties over the use and diversion of Sault Ste. Marie. However great the talents of Sir George Gibbons, he was not the only, or even the primary, author of the BWT. In its formulation, he had lots of help from New York's George Clinton; in its implementation, he and Clinton needed the aid of the professional American diplomatist, C. P. Anderson. In the election of 1911, despite Stacey's assertions that Alaska played a part — and even the War of 1812! — this critic remains unconvinced, for he has never found any evidence to support this popular point of view.

While reading *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, the reviewer was repeatedly

impressed by the force of affection within Ontario for Britain, the monarchy and the empire. Questions came to mind and went unanswered. Why did not Canadians resent the ways in which their fate was twisted by British politicians on such occasions as the signing and ratification of the Hay-Herbert Treaty in 1903, the interference by Governor-General Minto and others during the opening months of the Boer War, the heavy-handed efforts of Winston Churchill (at a later date) to involve Canadians in the mess at Chanak? Did not any Canadian infantrymen write home during the Great War, chronicling the filth and the carnage of battle? Why were the military blunders of a British general like Haig apparently accepted? Seventy per cent of the officers in Canada's first division were Canadian-born, largely from Ontario; the same percentage of enlisted men were British-born. It is relatively easy to explain the patriotic response of the Britons, but why such a large percentage of Canadian-born officers? Can it be explained by the form and nature of their education, the similarity between Canadian private schools and British "public" schools? The masters who taught them? Was it the pattern of elite society in Ontario? In Barbara Wilson's book, *Ontario and the First World War 1914 - 1918: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto, The Champlain Society, 1977), the same vexing questions came to mind.

All this is not to suggest that Miss Wilson wrote an imperfect book. In fact, she has created a very fine piece of historical literature, one of the best in the publications of the Champlain Society. In slightly more than 100 pages, she has written a multi-faceted history of wartime Ontario. Into this story she has woven many subjects: the popular impact of the war, recruitment, the question of "loyalty", the roles of women, blacks and Indians. (Only one "minority", though a large and significant one, was not considered: the Franco-Ontarians.) Her selection of documents, of an incredible variety and frequently from arcane sources, is awesome. Furthermore, the documents are cleverly co-ordinated with the introduction. To organize such disparate materials without producing a crazy-quilt required as much patience as it did logic. To top it off, Miss Wilson combines an easy style with a sense of humour. I liked her description of that feisty Anglophilic female, Miss Jessie McNab of Toronto. (She could have come directly from a garden party at Colonel G. T. Denison's house.) I also liked her account of that Toronto teacher, Henry Erland Lee, whose loyalty was savagely questioned, who enlisted and ironically became "the first Toronto teacher to die in action . . ." (p. xcvi). In the future, the subject of World War I will not be fully considered without reference to this work.

Quite different from the above — and not the least in genre — is *Ties That Bind: Canadian-American Relations in Wartime from the Great War to the Cold War* (Toronto and Saratoga, Samuel Stevens and Hakkert, 1977), a collection of eight essays written individually and collaboratively by Professors R. D. Cuff and J. L. Granatstein of York University. This is the second

and unrevised edition of a book published in 1975 as *Canadian-American Relations in Wartime*; and before this publication, five chapters had already appeared in various journals. I found the initial title more descriptive and whimsically wondered whether the second had not been extracted from that saccharine hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds". Not so, for the hymn's final stanza speaks of "perfect love and friendship [reigning] throughout eternity." If few marriages find "perfect love and friendship" what chance is there for Canadian-American relations? And yet, in comparing Canada and the United States, one should never forget that, whatever their differences, no two countries have populations more alike and economies more complementary. Moreover, despite the popular ignorance in which each regards the other, probably no two other countries are more aware of each other than Canada and the United States.

*Ties That Bind* is not a book so much as a series of essays with war as the uncertain common theme. As essays, the chapters vary in quality. Of particular interest to the reviewer were Chapters 3 ("Lloyd Harris and the Canadian War Mission to Washington") and 4 ("The Hyde Park Declaration, 1941: Origins and Significance"). In fullness and with understanding, these told the histories of Harris's mission (forerunner to complete diplomatic representation) and of Mackenzie King's successful invocation of a special wartime economic relationship with the United States. By contrast, Chapters 5 ("Getting on with the Americans: Canadian Perceptions of the United States, 1939 - 1945") and 7 ("Looking back at the Cold War") seemed somewhat superficial. There just were not enough samples taken on either side of the line to reach valid conclusions about "Canadian perceptions". Some statements resembled moral judgements rather than historical ones. The author (in this case, Granatstein) unequivocally declared that the Ogdensburg Agreement (establishing the Permanent Joint Board on Defence) "marked the shift from Canada as a British dominion to Canada as an American protectorate" (p. 101). Somewhat later, he asked whether Mackenzie King "did enough to counter American penetration" (p. 108) into Canadian life, without saying anything about what King did or could do. In Chapter 7, the two authors awkwardly tried to place Canadian foreign policy within the fuzzy framework of Gabriel Kolko's revisionist histories. The result was more fanciful than historical. It was a bit ironical to read that, in contrast to American diplomatists of the day, Canada's ambassador to Russia, Dana Wilgress, was not unduly concerned about Russia's post-war ambitions. Nothing was said about Wilgress's predispositions towards Russia; that he was, for example, married to a Russian.

Two other essays were of interest. Chapter 6 compared the almost incomparable personalities and philosophies of Lester Pearson and Dean Acheson. The authors also explored Pearson's (and Canada's) interest in Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty, wondering whether its insertion in the treaty

catered to Pearson's idealism or to the realities of domestic politics in Canada. This is a subject worth greater inquiry. Also meriting closer investigation is the idea broached in Chapter 8 — "exemptionalism", viz., the fact that Canada regularly received so many special exemptions from American measures designed to protect the American economy. There are potential theses lurking here. Was there, for example, a "special relationship" between the USA and Canada? Can it be said to have originated in the reciprocal trade agreements of the mid-1930s and to have endured at least until the thorny days of Richard Nixon and John Connally, when the US trade position no longer seemed capable of making special allowances for the Canadian economy? Or could one, somewhat more waggishly, ask how Ottawa managed so well and so long to "work both sides of the street"? Perhaps the Nixon-Connally coldness towards Canada was only an interlude in an otherwise enduring "special relationship", one that has worked as well in peacetime as in wartime?

When the reviewer first picked up J. L. Granatstein's and J. M. Hitsman's *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1977), he wondered why anyone had written a book on a subject already so well and so variously treated. That impression retreated before the recognition that this was a treatise deserving of attention. It was created by two scholars of real ability, sustained by a strong base of source materials, and written from a point of view quite unlike any of its predecessors. Let the following sentence, the book's ultimate, explain the essential difference: "Conscription has simply not worked in Canada and there seems no reason to believe that it ever will".

Before praising this work, permit the reviewer to get the nasty business of adverse criticism out of the way. The publications of both men have been well received. Granatstein's first book, *The Politics of Survival*, was first rate; the two that Hitsman wrote before his death in 1970 were works of high quality. Unfortunately, *Broken Promises* — in its style and in its emotionalism — is not like any of the above. You are never told who wrote what. You are told of Professor Granatstein's gratitude toward an editor of the Oxford University Press for the wonderful way in which she did her work. After reading this book, Edwin Newman would have found more than a few examples of inelegant prose. The writing style is redundant. Too often, sentences begin with conjunctions. The language is frequently hyperbolic, e.g., the "vengeful political murder" (p. 13) of Louis Riel. Sometimes it was simply too "hip" for this old boy; he winced at the sight of "stonewalled", "bite the bullet" and "scoring points". Clichés did not add lustre, e.g., "hard and fast", "part and parcel" and "yeoman service". Furthermore, the language was prolix and repetitive, and to the reader's confusion, indefinite references were "part and parcel" of the style.

It is always difficult to ignore infelicitous prose and consider content. Even

here, the reviewer's hackles occasionally rose. There was just too much sermonizing and not enough historiography. Conscription is a subject in which Professor Granatstein is so emotionally implicated (and the closer to the present, the warmer the emotion) that he invoked a little prayer for his two children in the introduction: "May they never be conscripted for anyone's war". By "anyone", it became clear that (see pages 105 and 109) he meant Canada's "brass" and big businessmen. The country's politicians were forgiven. Inhabiting a land without the tradition of war, Canada's inexperienced politicians were too easily duped by generals and admirals. Canada was unlike "older, wiser societies [whose] . . . statesmen were more skeptical . . ." (p. 206). (If only Herbert Asquith and Lloyd George had lived in an older and wiser land they would have known how to deal with General Haig!) Here and there were minor though annoying flaws. The nonsense (p. 48) about apprehended raids during World War I from German- and Irish-Americans was apparently taken as seriously as it was by that fire-breathing patriot, Colonel Denison. As an American, I bristled a bit when the author, for no apparent reason, quoted that inestimable military genius, the Duke of Connaught, who said that "experience has so far shown that American citizens do not always make the best soldiers". On p. 185, the author(s) referred to Operations Torch and Husky as great battles in World War II.

What about the thesis itself? The author(s) claim that the military advantages gained from conscription in both wars were slight; that, in fact, they were tragically outweighed by domestic political disadvantages. In both instances, war ended before the strength of the conscripted men could be fully employed. Furthermore, of what significance were or could be these minute additions to such massive armies? But, asks the reviewer, what if the wars had not been terminated? What, without proportionate participation in warfare, would Borden's position have been in London or at Versailles? It is also well to remember that politicians, unlike historians, must make decisions within existing and known circumstances; and under the circumstances confronting Borden and King in 1917 and 1944, what else could they have done? Yet, although the reviewer believes that the thesis of *Broken Promises* is inconclusive, he still welcomes the book. At least one reason is its patent biases. Students should always have options, however polarized. More importantly, the book is a good bureaucratic study — of the question of Canada's manpower, of the National Selective Service, and of the army.

The final book to be considered — and the last read by the reviewer — was Philip G. Wigley's *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: Canadian-British Relations, 1917 - 1926* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977). In a word, Wigley's book was excellent. Unlike so many students of commonwealth history — and of Canadian-American relations — the author has done a great deal of research in the archives of both Britain and Canada. The result is a book with depth and balance. The diverse research materials



have been rationally ordered and written up with style. What began as a doctoral thesis for Cambridge University has become a splendid addition to the shelf of commonwealth literature.

The book's complexity and detail really deprive it of a thesis or theses. It is a historical study of Canadian-British relations from that momentous year of 1917 (when the Imperial Cabinet first met and when, at the accompanying Imperial War Conference, Resolution IX was cast) until 1926 (when the Balfour Declaration was uttered). This was the era of Canada's transition from a self-governing dominion to "equality of status". The book, however, is much more than a study of British-Canadian relations. Wigley uses Canada as the premier and (till Ireland's angry emergence) the demanding dominion in order to serve as the thread of unity for a general history of commonwealth relations, 1917 - 1926. In a real sense, Wigley is more interested in writing history than in formulating theses. Indeed, one of his avowed purposes was to discount the false assumptions of past historians; that the era, 1917 - 1926 was "merely a passing deviation from the larger movement . . ." (p. 2); that the commonwealth grew according to plan and the measured beat of logic; and that the official British response to dominion pressures was always a reaction and "monolithic" (*ibid.*). In this reviewer's opinion, Wigley has plowed under two of the above assumptions. The growth of the commonwealth was neither planned nor inevitable. Moreover, London was not a monolithic agency reacting to events and pressures. Differences between the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office as to the nature of the commonwealth were often sharp and they occurred frequently. By 1923, if not earlier, the F.O. was as interested in pursuing an independent British foreign policy as Mackenzie King was in establishing Canadian policies.

The third assumption, as I have already indicated, seems less hardy, but still standing. Good arguments could be advanced to demonstrate that the Borden-Meighen era was somewhat of an aberration in British-Canadian relations and that the real progress of Canadian history was bent towards nationhood, both upon the continent of North America and within the British Commonwealth; that, as Canadians acquired "status" within the commonwealth, they secured "function" within Canadian-American relations. Perhaps, if Professor Wigley had also turned his attention to Canadian-American relations as they unfolded within the early years of the century and as they afterwards matured, he would have discerned a "larger movement". His introductory chapter tells us how Canada's imperial association had changed since the turn of the twentieth century. But nothing is said about the maturing, functional and national relationship with the United States — the informal lines of communication between Ottawa and Washington (Laurier's "spies"); the emergence of the British Ambassador as Canada's too; the creation of treaties in which the British had almost as little to do as with the Halibut Fishery Treaty of 1923 (the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 and the

Fur Seal Convention of July, 1911); and the establishment of direct agencies such as the International Joint Commission and the Canadian War Mission. (After all, both Resolution IX and the Imperial War Cabinet withered away with the coming of peace.) But despite these and other slight differences of interpretation, the reviewer regards Wigley's work as one of the finest to be found in commonwealth historical literature.

ALVIN C. GLUEK, JR.

### Recent Controversies in Canadian Business History

In the last few years the literature on Canadian business history has been immeasurably enriched by a number of important and controversial books. Among the most significant is a recent study by Michael Bliss in the Canadian Social History Series. In his *A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business, 1883 - 1911* (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1974), Professor Bliss argues that there was among Canadian businessmen at the turn of the twentieth century almost a mystique of public service, a belief that they were performing vital services for the nation. They saw their interests as synonymous with the prosperity of Canada in this period of economic growth. Pursuing only "a living profit", by which they meant a reasonable and modest return on their capital, businessmen felt themselves besieged by rapacious trade unionists and undermined by an indifferent federal government, business competition, and declining public belief in the virtues of free enterprise, hard work and thrift. Bliss draws impressively from a number of major Canadian business papers to explain the collective viewpoint of the merchants, manufacturers, bankers, railwaymen and shipowners, large and small, from Halifax to Vancouver on issues such as the tariffs and unions. While the author examines the narrow, self-contradictory, and sometimes ridiculous nature of the business outlook, he concludes by emphasizing the important point that, despite these shortcomings, the opinions of businessmen must be taken by historians as seriously as the views of contemporary politicians, labour leaders, clergymen, university professors, social critics or anyone else. Businessmen meant, Bliss reminds us, exactly what they said.

Professor Bliss has provided us with an important, provocative and exceptionally well-written book. But while he defends his thesis with vigour and persuasiveness, one has difficulty in accepting all his arguments. Among the weaknesses of his case is the establishment of an extremely broad category of businessmen which seems to include anyone, anywhere who buys, sells or trades in anything. But this seems a strangely naïve position for an historian.