

Canadian Newspapers and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919:
A Study of English-Language Media Opinion

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis is a study of English-language media opinion in relation to Canada's involvement in the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Using *The News Record*, *The Globe* and the *Manitoba Free Press*, this thesis will examine how the English Canadian press presented the Paris Peace Conference to Canadians from November 1918 to its signing in June 1919. Historians have traditionally presented the Peace Conference as a turning point in Canadian history that accelerated Canada's maturity from a colony to a fully-fledged nation. This paper will argue that Canadians' understanding of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was far more complex than the orthodox interpretation would suggest. While Canadian newspapers were concerned with Canada's status, they devoted far more attention to other matters. Canadian newspapers spent time discussing reparations, the Kaiser, old diplomacy and the future League of Nations.

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Introduction

On October 26, 1918, Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, received word from David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain, to make haste to Europe for meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet. At these meetings the Imperial War Cabinet would discuss imperial policy for the Peace Conference which would follow the end of hostilities.¹ Borden quickly made plans to head to the Conference with a team of cabinet ministers and experts and departed on November 7 for London. His purpose was to take part in the preliminary discussions respecting the terms of peace and to represent Canada in connection with the peace conference.² When the armistice was signed on November 11, Borden was on the Atlantic, arriving in London on November 18. Canada's odyssey at the Paris Peace Conference then began. Beginning with three months of planning in Britain and France followed by a conference lasting approximately six months, Canada was introduced to the world of international diplomacy. This experience would be chronicled by Canadian newspapers with great interest.

This thesis examines how the English-Canadian press presented the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Beginning with the journalist J.W. Dafoe who was part of Borden's Canadian delegation, Canadian historians have generally portrayed this conference as an important turning point for Canada. George P. deT Glazebrook wrote his account of Canada's position at the Peace Conference in 1942; C.P. Stacey was less detached, and was generally critical of the overall conference, but, like Glazebrook, he too conceded that the Conference was an important part of Canada's constitutional evolution. Margaret

¹ John English, *Borden: His Life and World*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1977), 167.

² *The News Record*, Nov. 18, 1918, 3.

Macmillan examined what Canada learned from the Peace Conference. Historians generally mentioned the Peace Conference as part of Canada's evolution as a Dominion and as a turning point in the Dominion-Empire relationship.³ These historians generally examine the Conference from the view of the politicians and diplomats in Paris and focus on the motivations of Canada's Prime Minister, Robert Borden and the debates he had with other delegates for increased Dominion status and influence.

Canadian newspapers examined many ideas and proposals for the Peace Conference. They often agreed, but not always. Often the newspapers' editors became emotional: they called for the head of the Kaiser, or lambasted Italy for its selfish ways; they pleaded with the United States to end its isolation; and the Japanese earned sympathy for their request of racial equality. There were contradictions in their articles and editorials at times. The press wanted to see that Canada received adequate representation at the Conference which befitted the role it played in the war. They wanted a treaty that properly punished Germany and that demanded for Canada appropriate restitution. The press also wanted to see a strong League of Nations emerge which would ensure world peace and end what they termed the old diplomacy of secret treaties and alliances.

As the meetings in Paris continued into the spring of 1919, other pressing domestic issues brought the press to debate whether Borden should stay in Paris and represent the country or come home. Thus, as much as historians have made a great deal of Canada's signature on the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919, readers of the English-Canadian press at the time saw it within a very different context. While the Peace Conference did feature

³ See for example, Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad, *History of the Canadian Peoples, Volume II: 1867 to the Present*, (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2006), 197-198.

prominently in Canadian newspapers, it was occasionally pushed aside by domestic issues such as the Winnipeg General Strike.

The historiography (Glazebrook, Stacey, Macmillan) suggests a consensus that ultimately began with a journalist who worked for the government in 1919, and which was later articulated by a diplomat writing in the midst of another world war. Though C.P. Stacey is more critical of the overall achievements of Paris, he too argues that Canada accrued important benefits from its time in Paris. All are agreed that Paris represented an important step for Canada in the long term development of Canada's international standing. But few of them dwell on the complex and often contradictory ways in which Canadian reporters both anticipated and then understood Paris.

G. P. deT Glazebrook, C. P. Stacey and Margaret Macmillan have provided the most detailed assessments of Canada's place at the Peace Conference. Many general histories of Canada such as *Robert Laird Borden: A Biography* by Robert Craig Brown, *Borden: His Life and World* by John English, *Canada, 1896-1921: a Nation Transformed* by Robert Craig Brown, *Ordeal by Fire: Canada, 1910-1945* by Ralph Allen, and *Canada: 1900-1945* by Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English, mention the Peace Conference at the end of the World War I chapter, or at the beginning of the inter-war chapter. When mentioning the Peace Conference they focus on the importance of Canada's representation and the uphill battle to achieve it. It is also important to look at how these sources have written specifically about Canadian public opinion and the press in relation to the Peace Conference.

The first of Glazebrook's two books on Canada and the Paris Peace Conference was written during the Second World War while he was a diplomat with the Department

of External Affairs. In those circumstances, it is not surprising that he would argue that Canada's role in Paris marked "...an important step in the march of Canada toward an increasing activity in world affairs and—closely bound up with that—toward greater autonomy in the field of foreign affairs."⁴ Perhaps Glazebrook was thinking of his own time when he argued that

One of the effects of the war on Canada was to make her more ready to take a direct place in the world of states. Its military and economic effort in the war had given her confidence, a sense of accomplishment, and added impetus to a slowly-rising spirit of nationalism.⁵

Stacey also saw the Peace Conference as an important moment in the history of Canada's external relations. In his book *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Stacey portrays the Peace Conference as a step on the way from Empire to Commonwealth that was made possible by Canada's efforts in the war. Macmillan wrote that Canada went to Paris because its citizens "cared deeply about a lasting peace settlement after the worst war the modern world had known, a war in which Canadians had fought and died."⁶

Historians also agree that the Canada's role in the war found the country a place at the Peace Conference. Canada's delegates reminded other nations, particularly Great Britain, of the large contribution of troops and supplies that Canada made to the war effort.⁷ Stacey wrote that in 1918 that "there was no doubt that the British Dominions would have to be consulted about the terms of peace." Stacey points out that the British

⁴ G. P. deT. Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942), v.

⁵ G. P. deT. Glazebrook, *A History of Canadian External Relations, In the Empire and the World, 1914-1939*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966), 14.

⁶ Margaret Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," *Canada and the First World War: Essays in Honour of Robert Craig Brown*, ed. David Mackenzie, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 379.

⁷ J. W. Dafoe, "Canada and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919," in *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 24, no. 3, (September, 1943), 238.

had accepted this principle in 1915.⁸ Lloyd George recognized this in his memoirs of the Peace Conference. He wrote of a huge Canadian contribution and that Canadian troops were responsible for some of the most brilliant victories of the war.⁹ Dafoe wrote that it was Canada's participation in the war that truly allowed it to establish itself as a distinct nation.¹⁰ The Dominions succeeded in making their claim that they had earned their nationhood and the right for representation at the Peace Conference due to their significant contribution to the war.¹¹ It was this large wartime contribution that historians argue allowed Canada to push successfully for stronger representation for Canada and the other Dominions at the Paris Peace Conference.

Historians have also spent much time analysing Canada's objectives going into the Peace Conference. Glazebrook argued that Canada went into the conference looking for more equality of status with other countries and to establish new relationships with Britain and other foreign powers.¹² Glazebrook wrote that Canada had a special interest in the League of Nations:

From every point of view this came close to Canada. It involved her equality of status on international bodies, proposed commitments by the members that called for close study, and was intended to include the United Kingdom and the United States, the two great powers by whose policies Canada was always most affected.¹³

A review of the newspaper coverage at the time confirms these generalities, but the realities are more complex, and are addressed in the second chapter. In the giddy mood of the post-war, Canadians had a number of lofty (and not so lofty) aims.

⁸ C. P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies*. Vol. I. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977), 240.

⁹ David Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), 126.

¹⁰ John W. Dafoe, *The Voice of Dafoe: a selection of editorials on collective security, 1931-1944*, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1945), 262.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 262.

¹² Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 125.

¹³ Glazebrook, *A History of Canadian External Relations*, 17.

Glazebrook also acknowledged that Canada did pursue other interests while at the Conference. Canada was interested in racial equality, the proposed labour organization and the convention on air navigation.¹⁴ Ultimately, Canada's foreign policy at this stage was rooted in what was best for Canada. Canada was interested in the labour organization because, according to Glazebrook, Canada was "a country of increasing industrial importance where the views of organized labour made up an important element in public opinion."¹⁵ Canada had recognized the impact that international relations would have on its own domestic affairs and had decided that it had better be involved in the formation of these treaties.

Stacey agreed with Glazebrook that "from what has already been said it emerges clearly that what Canada and the other Dominions were primarily interested in at Paris was their own status, and they pursued this object with determination and considerable success."¹⁶ Stacey also wrote that Canada was mostly interested in affairs relating to Britain and the US.¹⁷ Canada went in with a goal of changing its status within the British Empire.¹⁸ Again Canada was interested in affairs that most affected Canadians. Macmillan argues that the Canadian representatives quickly learned that Canada's interests did not always match those of the Empire.¹⁹ Macmillan emphasized what Canada had learned at the Conference, rather than its goals. The Canadian government was more concerned with issues that might affect Canada at the Peace Conference, rather than those that dealt with Germany.

¹⁴ Ibid, 19.

¹⁵ Ibid, 19.

¹⁶ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 251.

¹⁷ Ibid, 270.

¹⁸ Ibid, 252

¹⁹ Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," *Canada and the First World War*, 386.

Canadian historians have also carefully studied the role of Borden at the Conference. Dafoe wrote that Borden carried with him the conviction that Canada deserved equal representation, and he told British leaders that Canada would not attend the Peace Conference without direct representation.²⁰ Most Canadian accounts emphasized the strong line taken by Borden. Borden came across as a man who was prepared to do anything to ensure Canada's rightful place at the conference. Stacey saw Borden as the man who pushed the hardest for Dominion representation and organized the Dominions to present a united front.²¹ Stacey also wrote that it was Borden who pushed Canada-US relations as one of the focal points of Canada's efforts at the Conference.²² Glazebrook described Borden as a broker between factions within the British Empire and as a fighter for Dominion rights.²³ Borden was respected enough within the Empire that he was able to bring differing sides together, yet he was also able to push for Canada's interests. Acting as the ring leader for the other Dominions, he brought their cause to the forefront.

The historian L.F. Fitzhardinge disputed this point, suggesting that the Australian Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes took the lead for Dominion equality.²⁴ Borden was more inclined to follow the lead of Britain and was protective of his position as the senior Dominion Prime Minister.²⁵ Fitzhardinge portrayed Borden as a man more interested in maintaining his high position with Lloyd George than with pushing hard for Dominion equality at the Peace Conference. However, this still suggests that Borden was still very

²⁰ Dafoe, "Canada and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919," *CHR*, 236, 238.

²¹ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 245, 256.

²² *Ibid*, 271.

²³ Glazebrook, *A History of Canadian External Relations*, 20.

²⁴ L. F. Fitzhardinge, "Hughes, Borden, and Dominion Representation at the Paris Peace Conference", in *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XLIX, No. 2 (June, 1968): 160.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 161.

much interested in ensuring Canada had an important role by jealously guarding his position.

There is some, but not much discussion of Canadian press coverage of the Conference. M. E. Nichols examined the problem of Canadians receiving relevant news through the news agencies and the problems Canadian newspapers had with the Peace Conference. Nichols wrote that the Associated Press was the only source of international news, and it was not adequate for American and Canadian readers at the same time.²⁶ The example Nichols used was the British elections where AP reports were few, while Canadian interest was high and American interest low.²⁷ The British elections along with the Armistice and the Peace Conference in only three months revealed the Canadian Press' meager overseas capabilities, in which they were unable to even send a correspondent to the Peace Conference.²⁸ There were many challenges confronting Canadian newspapers in their efforts to provide coverage of the Peace Conference.

Glazebrook wrote briefly about public opinion in *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*. He wrote that an examination of Canadian newspapers revealed that the press underplayed the importance of Canadian representation at the Peace Conference and failed to take advantage of the regular cables offered by Dafoe.²⁹ Perhaps Canadian newspaper editors were loath to be dictated to by someone they might see as a government press officer. When Canadian newspapers examined the treaties they often focused on the effects they would have on Canada.³⁰ Canadian newspapers still had much to learn about

²⁶ M. E. Nichols, *CP: The Story of the Canadian Press*, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1948), 150.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 118.

³⁰ Ibid.

covering international events. Canadian public opinion did not necessarily coincide with the opinion of Canada's decision makers overseas.

Did Canada's representation actually contribute anything to the Conference? Glazebrook wrote that "generally speaking, it is fair to say that the Canadian delegation was active and far sighted in its pursuit of Canadian interests, and gave a good impression in its general work in the Conference."³¹ Stacey was less enthusiastic, pointing out that Canada made some contribution to the proceedings, but had little influence on the settlement with Germany.³² For Stacey, Canada helped "through the commissions and committees, exemplified by Borden's labours on the boundaries of Greece, which helped to produce a settlement that has stood to the present day. More of it was made through the British Empire delegation."³³ For both historians, Canada contributed in areas that would affect their own interest and also in rather minor areas.

There was also a consensus that Canada certainly benefited from its relatively minor contribution to the Peace Conference. Soothed by receiving equal representation, Canada was able to have a greater influence in the negotiations.³⁴ Stacey called the whole conference a "gigantic sham", but he allowed that if no one else profited from the system of equal representation, the Dominions certainly did.³⁵ Macmillan wrote that "although imperial unity was maintained, the fault lines had become apparent in Paris. Dominions had gained the right to accept or withhold their assent to international agreements."³⁶ By Canada and the other Dominions gaining representation at the Conference, the British Empire was becoming a commonwealth.

³¹ Glazebrook, *A History of Canadian External Relations*, 21.

³² Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 252-252.

³³ Ibid, 251.

³⁴ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 46.

³⁵ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 249.

³⁶ Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," *Canada and the First World War*, 402.

The benefits Canadians accrued were almost immediate, write historians. Their representatives were able to sign the treaty as representatives from the Dominion of Canada under the British Empire signature.³⁷ It was not quite what Canada would have wanted, but Canada was signing an international document as an important member of the British Empire. Government leaders saw this as a clear sign of Canada's increasing sovereignty. Macmillan was less positive. For her the meaning of the signatures was as ambiguous as Canada's status at the Peace Conference.³⁸ By signing the treaty, Canada was able to gain representation in the newly formed League of Nations and the International Labour Organization with a status that was equal to that of any other nation.³⁹ With membership in these international organizations, Canada was able to take part in international negotiations and agreements independent of Britain. They would now have a much stronger means of articulating Canada's position on issues rather than it coming through a British Empire delegate.

Glazebrook argued that the Peace Conference would have a lasting impact on Canada's foreign affairs because Canadian politicians would gain experience at conducting diplomacy. Glazebrook wrote that:

Official Canada had gained experience in the arts of war and diplomacy, and the public was to exhibit a marked degree of interest in world affairs – an interest that had existed only in a small degree before the war. Here, if properly encouraged and channelled, was one of the most important assets that a country with world interests could have. An informed and critical public opinion would in turn stimulate parliament to a close study of the government's foreign policy, and ensure that a degree and direction of Canada's activity in the foreign field was in accordance with the considered desires of the peoples.⁴⁰

³⁷ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 111.

³⁸ Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," *Canada and the First World War*, 393.

³⁹ Robert Laird Borden, *Canada in the Commonwealth, from Conflict to Co-operation*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929), 103.

⁴⁰ Glazebrook, *A History of Canadian External Relations*, 22-23.

For Glazebrook, the Conference had not only succeeded in moving Canada towards increased sovereignty, it would also create an interest in foreign affairs in the country. The Canadian press had covered the Peace Conference closely, and Canadians had ample opportunity to read about the Conference. Now, hopefully the Canadian people would also join the country's politicians in seeking more autonomy from Britain. Glazebrook was very confident that the Peace Conference had wide-reaching effects within Canada.

We can look back and see that historians and those who took part in these events have a rather positive view of Canada's experience. As both a journalist and a participant, Dafoe believed that the Peace Conference was a catalytic event which broke up the traditional empire and replaced it with a group of nations working towards common goals.⁴¹ Dafoe said that the Peace Conference was the moment in history when Canada fully claimed the powers that justified its participation in these international events.⁴² Later commentators echoed Dafoe's tone. Glazebrook said that the decisions reached near the end of the war and at the Peace Conference were a strong starting point in the case for Dominion autonomy.⁴³ Stacey called the negotiations an important precedent because they set the stage for consultation with the Dominion on British policy.⁴⁴

Historians and those who took part in the events largely agreed on what happened, why it happened, and why it was helpful. They agreed that the outbreak of World War I presented an opportunity for Canada to take more control of its affairs. In the narrative presented by these historians it was thanks to Borden, other Dominion leaders and Lloyd George, that the Dominions were given equal status at the Paris Peace Conference and

⁴¹ Dafoe, "Canada and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919," *CHR*, 235.

⁴² *Ibid*, 241.

⁴³ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 127.

⁴⁴ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 257.

were given an opportunity to affect the outcome. As a consequence of Canada achieving this status, it was able to play a larger role in international affairs, especially through the new League of Nations and was able to develop policy from Ottawa rather than London. However, this consensus does little to tell us what Canadians read about these seminal events in their history. Therefore, to gain some kind of understanding of what Canadians were thinking about the Peace Conference, we must examine their main source of knowledge about the Peace Conference, the Canadian press.

In the days before television and radio, the primary source of information was the newspaper. While not giving a completely truthful representation of public opinion, newspapers do offer insight into what the Canadian public was reading. According to one analyst of newspapers, there are two ways of analysing public opinion outside of an election. One is by public opinion polls, and the other is by an analysis of newspaper opinion.⁴⁵ At this time, there was little to no public polling done, therefore in order to decipher Canadian public opinion at the time an analysis of Canadian newspapers is required. For the purposes of this analysis, three newspapers were chosen to compare and analyse: *The Globe*, the *Manitoba Free Press*, and *The News Record* from Kitchener, Ontario. The newspapers examined were between November 1918 when the armistice was signed and July 1919 when the Treaty of Versailles was finally signed.

Governments also recognized the importance of newspapers as creators of political opinion. To that end, Sir Robert Borden decided to include representatives of the press with his official delegation. In November 1918, Cabinet Minister Newton Rowell outlined in a letter to Borden the importance of good publicity of Canada's actions

⁴⁵ James S. Twohey, "An Analysis of Newspaper Opinion on War Issues," in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (Autumn, 1941), 448.

overseas. Rowell wrote that “the lack of publicity last summer created a serious condition of public sentiment in Canada and led to very grave and widespread dissatisfaction with the Government.”⁴⁶ Rowell did not want to see voters dissatisfied with Borden while he was at the Peace Conference. He also wrote:

It appears to me that publicity will be doubly important during the next few months. With the probable closing down of munitions plants and men being thrown out of employment and with the reaction from the strain of work, there is likely to be considerable unrest. We can only expect to carry public opinion if we keep it well advised of what is being done by the Ministers overseas and of the necessity of their being there.⁴⁷

Rowell was blessed with excellent foresight. Canadian newspapers did begin to write unfavourably of the Prime Minister being in Paris during the winter of 1919 and wondered when he would come home. However, John W. Dafoe, the editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*, and official press correspondent, defended the Prime Minister outlining the excellent work that the Prime Minister was accomplishing. Rowell also managed to foresee the labour difficulties that would arise, such as the Winnipeg General Strike. Unfortunately, Dafoe’s glowing reports of the Canadian delegation were not enough to distract the workers from going on strike and the *Manitoba Free Press* having to shut down for a few days due to lack of paper.

The *Manitoba Free Press* was chosen by the author because its editor J. W. Dafoe was a representative of the Canadian Department of Public Information at the conference, and was sending reports back to Canada, and in particular to the *Manitoba Free Press*. The newspaper philosophically supported the Liberals before the war, but not

⁴⁶ Canada. Department of External Affairs. “The Paris Peace Conference of 1919,” *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, vol. 2, ed. R. A. Mackay, (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1967-), 1.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

exclusively.⁴⁸ During the war, Dafoe and the newspaper changed their support to Borden and the Unionists. The *Manitoba Free Press* also had an international outlook, thanks to its editor Dafoe and the diversity of Winnipeg.⁴⁹ The newspaper definitely had a close relationship with the governing Unionists. The owner of the newspaper was Sir Clifford Sifton, brother of Arthur Sifton, a Cabinet Minister who accompanied Borden to Paris.⁵⁰ However, even Clifford Sifton thought that Dafoe supported the Unionists too much, saying that no government had ever had such a strong supporter within a newspaper.⁵¹ Also, the man who recommended Dafoe to Borden was Liberal-Unionist Cabinet member Newton Rowell.⁵² The government knew that Dafoe shared the same goals, and that it would be able to get friendly stories sent back to Canada. Since the Boer War, Dafoe had aligned the *Manitoba Free Press* along a strong nationalist position.⁵³

The Globe was chosen because it was one of the larger newspapers in Canada at the time. The President-Publisher of *The Globe* at the time was William Gladstone Jaffray, a conservative and religious man.⁵⁴ Jaffray refused to allow *The Globe* to carry “advertisements for cigarettes, girdles, whisky and cheap clothing.” He also gave sympathetic coverage to his fellow religionists and unsympathetic coverage to those he considered atheists.⁵⁵ The newspaper’s religious leanings would be evident throughout its coverage of the Peace Conference. The Canadian journalism historian W. H. Kesterton

⁴⁸ W. H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970), 97.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 98.

⁵⁰ David J. Hall, 2004, “Sifton, Sir Clifford,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=41997>, accessed Jan. 18, 2008.

⁵¹ Ramsay Cook, *The Politics of John W. Dafoe and the Free Press*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 87.

⁵² *DCER*, vol. 2, 1.

⁵³ Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada*, 178.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 85.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 85.

noted that at the time *The Globe* had editorials noted for their sermon-like cadence and tone, particularly when moved by strong national emotion.⁵⁶ At the time, *The Globe* was in the process of changing from a newspaper that supported the Liberals to one that supported the Conservatives.⁵⁷

Finally, *The News Record* was chosen because it was a paper from an area that had many German immigrants. The owner of the newspaper at the time of the Conference was W. J. Motz who had purchased the paper in 1918. Motz was a member of the local German community and had been involved in German language newspapers for many years. Motz was also a proponent of German culture.⁵⁸ The war years had not been easy for Motz. As a result of a summary his German newspaper, the *Berliner Journal*, printed on the first year of the war, he was accused of sedition by a competing newspaper.⁵⁹ Motz and *The News Record* presented an alternative narrative of the Peace Conference to those presented by other papers in English Canada.

In this study both the news pages and editorials will be examined. The American sociologist and former journalist, Robert E. Park wrote that “in a democracy where everyone reads, and particularly in a period of rapid change and revolution when political opinion and political power are in the making, it is news rather than the editorial that makes opinion.”⁶⁰ Both editorials and news have an effect on public opinion. It was Park’s argument that there can be no public opinion, unless the public knows what is happening. Public opinion is formed through discussion and debate and this can only

⁵⁶ Ibid, 133.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 85.

⁵⁸ Patricia P. McKegney, *The Kaiser’s Bust: A Study in War-time Propaganda in Berlin, Ontario 1914-1918*, (Wellesley, Ont: Bamberg Press, 1991), 9, 126, 149.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 141.

⁶⁰ Robert E. Park, “News and the Power of the Press,” in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVII, No. 1, (July 1941): 4.

happen in a free society, where people are informed.⁶¹ Editorials are often simply the product of an editor, an editorial committee, or a publisher. But in their tone and argument, they often reflected a range of opinion that is seldom considered in wider studies of the post-war period.

This thesis is organized into three chapters. The first will consider Canada's ambiguous constitutional position before and during the First World War. Then it will introduce briefly the Canadian delegation and the conference itself. The second chapter will consider how the Canadian press anticipated the conference's opening in January 1919. Showing at once a high-minded morality and internationalism, a vitriolic hatred of the Germans, as well as a certain amount of self-interest, Canadian journalists and editorialists considered in great detail what the Paris Peace Conference should achieve. Above all, the press insisted that Canada's sacrifice had earned it the 'right' to participate in the deliberations that, it was hoped, would bring a permanent peace. In the final chapter, the period from the beginning of the Conference until the Treaty of Versailles was signed, will be examined. This period of time demonstrated a return to realism in the Canadian press. An idealistic view of the League of Nations persisted, however the actions of certain countries at the Conference brought about a realization that not everything was perfect. Canadian newspapers were shocked to find out that many countries would continue conducting diplomacy in the old way.

This paper will argue that Canadians' understanding of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was far more complex than the orthodox interpretation would suggest. In the months between the end of the war and the opening of the Paris Peace Conference, the English-Canadian newspapers combined a lofty, religious optimism about the need for a

⁶¹ Ibid.

just and permanent peace with vitriolic arguments to hang the Kaiser and to gain for Canada compensation from Germany. All the newspapers agreed that Canada deserved a status at the conference that confirmed its participation in the war; indeed, this became recognized by some as a Canadian right.

As the Peace Conference began, both the tone and substance of Canadian reporting changed as optimism gave way to a more realistic view of the Conference and Canada's role in it. Canadians continued to have close coverage of the proceedings, which certainly did not match the almost naive optimism that anticipated the conference. Eager claims for reparations gave way to the harsh dilemma of considering how Germany was to pay its enemies without destroying the fragile German economy. Calls to abolish secret treaties gave way against the persistence of the old diplomacy. Concerns about American leadership only heightened as Woodrow Wilson began to fight with his Congressional opponents over what many considered the most important part of the conference, the League of Nations. And calls for racial equality did not receive a very receptive hearing in Canadian newspapers. Nor were these reports of Paris read in a vacuum. As the proceedings wore on, Canadian attention drew away from Paris. Demands grew for the prime minister to return home to address more demanding domestic issues. By the time of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919, Robert Borden was home. Even as Parliament debated whether to ratify the Treaty to which it Canadians had offered a signature under the British delegation, Canada's position at Paris seemed far from certain.

Chapter 1

Canada's Constitutional Status and the Peace Conference

This chapter first explores Canada's constitutional status prior to and during World War I. It then examines the conference itself, with particular attention to the Canadian delegation.

Canada entered the Peace Conference with an uncertain constitutional status relative to Great Britain and the British Empire. Borden wrote after the war that while “the Germans may have grasped other conditions, it is clear that they thoroughly failed to comprehend the constitutional relations between the self-governing nations.”⁶² This failure to understand the British Empire led them to underestimate the men and resources the Empire would be able to bring to bear.

Canada's constitutional status was far from clear because it had been evolving since before Confederation. In the years just after Confederation, Canada's politicians were engaged by Britain to negotiate treaties with the United States. In 1871 an elected Canadian official, the Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, was on the British delegation that helped negotiate the Treaty of Washington, which settled political and economic issues between the Empire and the US.⁶³ The next step after Dominion participation in treaty making was the ability for Canada to opt out of treaties made by Britain. In 1877 this became so, when British commercial treaties were no longer made applicable to the colonies without their assent, and from 1882 on, all treaties required a

⁶² Robert Laird Borden, *Canadian Constitutional Studies*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1922), 96.

⁶³ Arthur Berriedale Keith, *Dominion Autonomy in Practice*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 52.

special clause if it applied to the colonies.⁶⁴ In the last years of the 19th century, principles for negotiations between colonies and foreign powers were laid down. The principles were strict: the Imperial Government had to take part in every step of the treaty negotiations, and could in the end block any treaty from being ratified.⁶⁵ However, when formulating its foreign policy, the Imperial Government continued to follow a policy of non-consultation with the Dominions.⁶⁶

The Prime Minister from 1896 to 1911 was Sir Wilfrid Laurier who rejected any Imperial consultation on foreign policy with the Dominions, since this would require the Dominions to take on a greater responsibility.⁶⁷ Laurier did not believe that the country was ready to take responsibility for what might come from a more independent foreign policy. Despite these beliefs, it was Laurier who created the Department of External Affairs in 1909. However, Laurier had to be pushed into it, and at the time, the Department was not considered a proper foreign office, but rather machinery to make the current way of doing business more efficient.⁶⁸

When Sir Robert Borden became Prime Minister in 1911, he insisted that Canada be consulted on foreign policy matters. Borden began to contemplate having a minister of his Cabinet stationed in London who would attend meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence when matters of Dominion concern were raised. A major change occurred in Dominion-Imperial relations in 1912 when, at the Radiotelegraphic Conference, the Dominions were represented by delegates with full authority from the King, and sat as a separate delegation from the British. This was followed the next year at the Conference

⁶⁴ Ibid, 52.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 53-54.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 55.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 121.

on Safety of Life at Sea with delegates from the Dominions and Britain again sitting separately.⁶⁹ In the view of some, these precedents allowed the Dominions some measure of international status and helped prepare the Dominions for more international responsibility.

The First World War brought about major change in Dominion-Imperial relations and the pace of evolution towards Dominions sovereignty began to rapidly increase.⁷⁰ When Great Britain went to war in August of 1914, its declaration committed the whole Empire to the war.⁷¹ While Canada had no choice in the matter, it did have the choice as to how it would support Britain in the war. Canada offered its aid to Britain and sought advice on what was required for the war effort. In return, Britain made no demands of Canada.⁷² Britain was careful not to trample on the Dominions' autonomy over their internal affairs.⁷³ Britain made the big decisions and directed the war, while the Dominions were able to choose how best to help and to direct the efforts in their own countries. This autonomy was also extended overseas to the Canadian Expeditionary Force. While military operations fell under the direction of British Generals, the Canadian forces were administered after 1916 by the Overseas Ministry that was responsible to the Canadian Government and Parliament.⁷⁴ The Overseas Ministry was responsible for the personnel, property and expenditures of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Britain.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Keith, *Dominion Autonomy in Practice*, 56.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Alfred Leroy Burt, *The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth from the American Revolution*, (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1956), 679.

⁷² Arthur Berriedale Keith, *War Government of the British Dominions*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 20.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Borden, *Canadian Constitutional Studies*, 99-100.

⁷⁵ Desmond Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada's Overseas Ministry in the First World War*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 85.

The Dominions were not invited into any kind of partnership to help direct the war effort during the first half of the war. In 1915, however, the British government agreed to consult the Canadian Prime Minister in all aspects when the time came for discussing the terms of peace.⁷⁶ When it came time to negotiate peace terms at the end of the war, Britain intended to consult its Dominions. However, due to the considerable size of men and aid contributed by the Dominions, their lack of say in the running of the war began to be a problem.⁷⁷ When David Lloyd George became Prime Minister of Britain in December 1916 he decided this would change. On March 2, 1917, the Imperial War Cabinet met for the first time and included the British War Cabinet plus the Prime Ministers of the self-governing Dominions.⁷⁸ Lloyd George formed the Imperial War Cabinet so that the Dominions would feel more intimately involved in the war planning, and therefore hopefully be willing to offer more support.⁷⁹ The Dominions would be keen to accept the idea because it would mean a larger say for them in Imperial policy.

The Imperial War Cabinet had no constitutional authority and existed only as long as its members willed its existence. The Cabinet or any single member could not issue orders to the others nor could it bind its members to agreements.⁸⁰ It was essentially a meeting of representatives of equal governments to discuss the war and recommend policies to their respective governments. It was an excellent place for discussion and allowed Dominion Ministers to present their views to the British War Cabinet.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 186.

⁷⁷ Keith, *War Government of the British Dominions*, 22.

⁷⁸ Borden, *Canadian Constitutional Studies*, 110-111

⁷⁹ Brown, *Robert Laird Borden*, 70.

⁸⁰ Keith, *Dominion Autonomy in Practice*, 73 and Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, (London: Macmillan, 1929), 313.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

The Imperial War Conference meetings in 1917 and 1918 brought the prospect of change to Canada's constitutional status. The most important contribution of these Conferences was the passing of Resolution IX on April 16, 1917 which dealt with future constitutional relations.⁸² This resolution has been attributed to Borden with help from the South African representative, General Jan Smuts.⁸³ The resolution read:

The Imperial War Conference are of opinion that the readjustment of the constitutional relations of the component parts of the Empire is too important and intricate a subject to be dealt with during the War, and that it should form the subject of a special Imperial Conference to be summoned as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities.

They deem it their duty, however, to place on record their view that any such readjustment, while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs, should be based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth, and of India as an important portion of the same, should recognize the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations, and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern, and for such necessary concerted action, founded on consultation, as the several Governments may determine.⁸⁴

The resolution called for future constitutional talks after the war, and then outlined the basis of what this future conference would discuss. Borden wrote that:

This resolution establishes the basis of future co-operation; it gives clear recognition to equality of nationhood between the Dominions and the Mother Country; and it marks one of the final stages in the evolution of constitutional relations within the British Empire.⁸⁵

In Canada, the resolution appealed to both Nationalists and Imperialists. While the resolution describes the Dominions as "nations" it also called for combined efforts.⁸⁶ The resolution also was not definitive about Dominion sovereignty and left it open to future

⁸² Borden, *Canadian Constitutional Studies*, 111-112.

⁸³ Brown, *Robert Laird Borden*, 80.

⁸⁴ *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences from 1887 to 1937*, ed. Maurice Ollivier, Vol. II, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1954), 175.

⁸⁵ Borden, *Canadian Constitutional Studies*, 112.

⁸⁶ A. Gordon Dewey, *The Dominions and Diplomacy: The Canadian Contribution*, vol. I, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1929), 315.

discussion.⁸⁷ However, this resolution would encourage Canada to look for more autonomy and a greater say in Imperial affairs, which would culminate in Canadian representation at the Paris Peace Conference. It was not yet inevitable that Canada would get a seat at the Conference, but it was fairly certain that Britain would support its Dominions in any effort they made for representation.

The Constitutional status of Canada during the First World War is difficult to determine. Canada was recognized in international law but no one was exactly sure about the definition of this recognition.⁸⁸ It was clearly not a sovereign nation since it could not declare war or make peace, yet it was more than a colony.⁸⁹ Canada's status had changed since Confederation yet nothing new had been added to its constitution. How then to interpret Canada's status? According to P. J. Noel Baker, the full significance can be understood only through comparison of the text of the constitution with the historical development.⁹⁰ Also, the constitution must be judged along with "new practices that by general consent modify or change in their application the existing rules of the statutory law of the Constitution."⁹¹ Canada's status during the war, and immediately after was confusing. However, the status was changing due to new practices developing and promises of future changes, such as Resolution IX. But such ambiguity meant that the Canadian delegation that Borden gathered for his trip to Paris was most uncertain of its status, let alone its ability to contribute meaningfully to the conference.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 314-315.

⁸⁸ P. J. Noel Baker, *The Present Juridical Status of the British Dominions in International Law*, (Toronto: Longman, Green and Co., 1929), 1.

⁸⁹ Maurice Ollivier, *Problems of Canadian Sovereignty from the British North America Act, 1867 to the Statute of Westminster, 1931*, (Toronto: Canada Law Book Company, Limited, 1945), 271.

⁹⁰ Baker, *The Present Juridical Status*, 3.

⁹¹ Ibid.

The Paris Peace Conference began on January 18, 1919. However, delegates had been meeting and planning since the war ended the previous November. Sir Robert Borden and the rest of the Canadian delegation had been summoned to England to begin discussions before the armistice had even been signed on 11 November 1918. The Canadians became part of a massive diplomatic gathering. While Canada brought a rather modest delegation of 15 members, countries like Serbia brought 100 delegates. British Prime Minister Lloyd George brought 200 assistants and 200 clerks.⁹² In total, 32 countries attended that would all be represented at the Plenary Conferences. However, only six of these conferences were held before the Treaty of Versailles was signed in late June 1919.⁹³ The major countries: the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan would meet regularly and make the real decisions. They would form the Council of Five, or the Council of Ten, known as the Supreme Council, when the foreign ministers joined their leaders. There was also the smaller Council of Four which excluded Japan. This grouping could be made even smaller by excluding Italy, to form The Big Three. The large countries were joined by many smaller nations that had participated in the war. The British Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and India were granted representation as well, although they did not find this out until January 1919. Germany and its allies were not invited. Neither was Russia.

The American delegation was led by President Woodrow Wilson. He was the first American president to travel to Europe while in office, and his political opponents accused

⁹² Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," *Canada and the First World War*, 380, and George Goldberg, *The Peace to End Peace: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919*, (London: Pitman Publishing, 1970), 19.

⁹³ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 46.

him of breaking the constitution as a result.⁹⁴ As a president who campaigned against war in 1916, Wilson was very cautious about bringing America into the war in 1917, and he never became used to being a war President.⁹⁵ Wilson, eager to end the war and to push the other Allies along, agreed publicly with the German plea that the Fourteen Points be the basis of the armistice.⁹⁶ Wilson had introduced the fourteen basic principles in a speech to the US Congress on January 8, 1918 that were intended to lay the ground work for the peace that would follow.⁹⁷ The Fourteen Points dealt with issues from the territory of Germany and its allies and the territory they had conquered, to a call for “A general association of nations . . . formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.” Wilson’s plan for a league of nations would allow for all countries to discuss the world’s problems, and self-determination for all the downtrodden of Europe.⁹⁸

Other national leaders were less sure of the American principles. The French delegation was led by the Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau. He was the oldest national leader of the Council of Five, having seen the Prussians march into Paris in 1870. He had no illusions, having seen mankind at its worst over his many years.⁹⁹ Clemenceau had led France during the war with a single-minded urgency.¹⁰⁰ The French prime minister would take a leading role in the Peace Conference with the same urgency he had

⁹⁴ Margaret Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, (New York: Random House, 2001), 3.

⁹⁵ Goldberg, *The Peace to End Peace*, 12.

⁹⁶ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 19.

⁹⁷ “Fourteen Points”, *New Standard Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6, (Chicago: Standard Educational Corporation, 1985), P. F-294.

⁹⁸ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 19, 37, and Goldberg, *The Peace to End Peace*, 13.

⁹⁹ Goldberg, *The Peace to End Peace*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

in the war to ensure France was forever protected from future invasions by any means possible.¹⁰¹

The British Empire delegation arrived under the leadership of the freshly re-elected British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. Lloyd George would be the voice of moderation between the idealism of Wilson and the pragmatism of Clemenceau. While the British public back home wanted to see Germany suffer to the utmost, he knew that Germany would be unable to pay, and that forcing it could lead to economic disaster.¹⁰² It was also Lloyd George who had persuaded the other big powers to allow the Dominions representation outside of the British Empire at the Conference.¹⁰³

It is important to mention the contribution of other members of the Empire for they would often prove to be a thorn in the side of the Conference and of the mother country. The Australian Prime Minister, William ‘Billy’ Hughes, was by no means any kind of a moderate. He was used to the rough politics of Australia, was often deaf to any argument he did not like, and often made up Australian policy on his own.¹⁰⁴ Hughes was disliked by his fellow delegates. Wilson was enraged by Hughes and Clemenceau called him a “savage.”¹⁰⁵ Some have argued, however, that much of the increase in Dominion standing was attributable to work done by Hughes.¹⁰⁶ Whether or not this was true, there was no doubt that he worked alongside the other Dominion leaders to push for greater Dominion representation.

¹⁰¹ E. J. Dillon, *The Peace Conference*, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1919), 58.

¹⁰² Goldberg, *The Peace to End Peace*, 16.

¹⁰³ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 45.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 48.

¹⁰⁵ Goldberg, *The Peace to End Peace*, 68.

¹⁰⁶ Fitzhardinge, “Hughes, Borden and Dominion,” in *CHR*, 160.

The Canadian delegation consisted of only 15 delegates.¹⁰⁷ It included the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, and three of his cabinet ministers; Sir George Foster, Charles J. Doherty and Arthur L. Sifton. The Canadian legal experts included Loring C. Christie from the Department of External Affairs and Major Olivar Asselin from the Department of Justice. The military experts were Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie, Commander of the Canadian Corps, and Lieutenant Colonel Oliver M. Biggar. The Financial, Economic and Labour representatives were Lloyd Harris, chairman of the Canadian Mission at London, R. T. Younge, secretary of the Canadian Mission, F. P. Jones, vice-president of the War Trade Board, P. M. Draper, secretary of the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress and W. A. Warne, from the Department of Trade and Commerce. Two journalists, J. W. Dafoe and L. Trepanier, acted as representatives of the Department of Public Information.¹⁰⁸

The leader of the Canadian delegation to Paris had been Prime Minister since 1911, winning a majority in part by opposing reciprocity with the United States.¹⁰⁹ From the start of his term as Prime Minister, Borden was in favour of Canada having a voice in imperial foreign policy.¹¹⁰ Unlike his predecessor Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Borden was prepared for Canada to take on more responsibility in return for an increased role. He was not opposed to pressure tactics to get what he wanted from the British Government. Upset about the lack of consultation over the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917 and the perceived incompetence in the British High Command, Borden threatened to stop the flow of

¹⁰⁷ Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," *Canada and the First World War*, 380.

¹⁰⁸ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 138.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Craig Brown, 2004, "Borden, Sir Robert Laird," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=42133&query=Borden>, accessed Jan. 18, 2008.

¹¹⁰ Brown, "Borden."

Canadian troops if Canada was not consulted more.¹¹¹ He continued his efforts for increased Canadian consultation to the Peace Conference, where he demanded separate representation for Canada.¹¹² The Peace Conference was a big event for Borden, as he had spent most of his political career looking to see Canada take on greater responsibility with its foreign affairs.

The most experienced member of the Canadian delegation was Sir George Foster, the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Foster had been a member of the Conservative Party for many years, until the 1917 election when he joined Borden's Unionist party. Foster had served as a cabinet minister in Conservative governments since Sir John A. Macdonald was Prime Minister. Prior to the conference, Foster had diplomatic experience serving as a British delegate at the allied economic conference in 1916. He had strong opinions. Foster was disdainful of the idea of self-determination. In his diary, he called it the "Wilson legend," and referred to the supporters of the idea as being on a "pilgrimage." He felt, for example, that self-determination "if logically carried out, would erect a chaos of incapable and impossible communities, and spell ruin and disorder and possible anarchy."¹¹³ He also saw the Conference as "unique in history, and the deliberations and conclusions of which will influence the future of humanity as none other."¹¹⁴ Foster wrote in his diary on January 25, 1919, concerned that the Conference might get sidetracked, that "the terms of peace are the requirement of first importance, and on these the Conference must converge all its force and effort."¹¹⁵ He served as one of the two

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Robert Craig Brown, *Robert Laird Borden: A Biography Vol. II 1914-1937*, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1980), 145.

¹¹³ W. Stewart Wallace, *The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Sir George Foster*, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, at St. Martin's House, 1933), 194.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 197.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

members representing the British Empire on the Supreme Economic Council.¹¹⁶ Foster remained at the conference until June 12, 1919, when he was forced to return home due to his wife's poor health.¹¹⁷ Foster was a politician who truly believed in the importance of the Conference and a need for a lasting peace. But he had reservations about some of the conference's more lofty objectives.

The second member of Borden's Cabinet on the Canadian delegation was Charles Joseph Doherty, the Minister of Justice and the Unionist member from St. Anne, Québec. Doherty had been raised in Quebec, spoke French fluently and was a former lawyer and Quebec Superior Court judge before turning to politics.¹¹⁸ He had been Minister of Justice since before the war, first as a Conservative, and then as a Unionist. Like his fellow cabinet minister Arthur Sifton, Doherty's knowledge of foreign affairs was not as great as other members of the cabinet, and it was unclear why the two were chosen for the delegation.

The final cabinet member on the delegation was Arthur L. Sifton. This former Liberal Premier and Chief Justice of Alberta was the Minister of Customs and Inland Revenue in Borden's Unionist cabinet. He had resigned as Premier of Alberta in 1917 to join Borden's Union Government,¹¹⁹ and was the only former Liberal politician to join Borden in Paris. Arthur's brother, Clifford Sifton, was a former Liberal politician in the Laurier government and the owner of the *Manitoba Free Press*.¹²⁰ While enthusiastic

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 199.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 201.

¹¹⁸ H  l  ne Pelletier-Baillargeon, *Olivar Asselin et son temps: le volontaire*, Vol. I, (Saint-Laurent, Qu  bec:   ditions Fides, 2001), 238.

¹¹⁹ Legislative Assembly of Alberta, "The Honourable Arthur L. Sifton, 1910-1917," *Legislative Assembly of Alberta*, <http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/premiers/sifton.htm>, accessed Jan. 18, 2008.

¹²⁰ Hall, "Sifton."

about the British Empire, he wanted to see Canada gain increased international representation.¹²¹

There were other cabinet ministers that Borden could have brought who might have had more experience and knowledge in international relations. Perhaps Borden's goal in leaving some of his more experienced cabinet ministers in Ottawa was to leave a strong and knowledgeable team at home.¹²² Also, he chose members from both sides of the governing unionist coalition.¹²³ However, he did not always have the highest opinion of some of those he chose to bring with him. Borden thought Foster was inconsistent, and did not take his ideas seriously.¹²⁴ It was a delegation that Borden controlled. Borden attended most of the meetings of the British Empire delegation, and did not always tell his fellow Canadians what had transpired.¹²⁵ It was not clear what criteria Borden used to select members from his Cabinet for the delegation, however, he came away with a delegation that was chosen more for political reasons than for experience or knowledge.

Loring C. Christie from the Department of External Affairs was a close advisor to Borden. He had joined the Department in 1913 and became its first legal advisor.¹²⁶ He attended the Imperial Conferences, gatherings of British Empire leaders, with Borden, and helped him draft Resolution IX in 1917 which promised to deal with constitutional relations after the war.¹²⁷ Christie was a strong proponent of increased Canadian autonomy from the Empire. He saw Canada as more than a colony and believed it had a

¹²¹ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 126-127.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 35.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹²⁴ Brown, *Robert Laird Borden*, 208, and Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," *Canada and the First World War*, 381.

¹²⁵ Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," *Canada and the First World War*, 381.

¹²⁶ Robert Bothwell, 2008, "Christie, Loring Cheney," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001615>, accessed Jan. 18, 2008.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

separate individuality.¹²⁸ For Borden and Christie, the primary purpose of Canada's involvement in the war had been to prove that Canada could pull its weight and contribute internationally. The goal at the Imperial War Cabinet and Conferences as well as the Peace Conference was to gain recognition for Canada at international meetings and in international organizations.¹²⁹ Christie would be an important advisor and ally to Borden at the Peace Conference.

Accompanying Doherty to the conference was Major Olivar Asselin. Prior to the war, Asselin had been a journalist and budding politician. He had been editor of several newspapers and had worked at *Le Devoir* with its nationalist founder, Henri Bourassa.¹³⁰ Asselin enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915 and was asked by the Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes, to raise the 163rd Battalion as a French-Canadian infantry battalion.¹³¹ To Asselin's dismay, the battalion was disbanded on arrival in England, and he transferred to the 22nd Infantry Battalion.¹³² Asselin was a Francophile, who feared above all else German rearmament after the war.¹³³ At the conference Doherty was sitting on a committee dealing with European minorities. He had asked Asselin to join the Canadian delegation as his advisor on minority issues, due to Asselin's French-Canadian background.¹³⁴

Serving as military advisor to the delegation was Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie, the commander of the Canadian Corps. The other members of the delegation

¹²⁸ Robert Bothwell, *Loring Christie: The Failure of Bureaucratic Imperialism*, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1988), 218-219.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹³⁰ H el ene Pelletier-Baillargeon, 2004, "Asselin, Olivar," *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=42129>, accessed Jan. 18, 2008

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Pelletier-Baillargeon, *Olivar Asselin et son temps*, 237.

consulted him about the military terms of the treaty.¹³⁵ He also provided tours of the battlefields to various members of the Canadian delegation such as Borden and Dafoe.¹³⁶ Currie was in favour of harsh terms for the Germans. He had seen results of the war first hand and wanted a lasting peace and he believed that German military power had to end.¹³⁷ Currie also provided much of the information that Borden used to press for increased Canadian autonomy. Through his leadership of the Canadian Corps and its excellent war record, Currie gave Borden the military victories that he could use to demand Canadian representation at the Peace Conference.¹³⁸

John Wesley Dafoe was editor of the *Manitoba Free Press* and served as the English representative of the Department of Public Information. Dafoe has been described as “powerful and persuasive” and as “one of the most influential Canadian journalists in history.”¹³⁹ Dafoe had started out as a Liberal, but saw himself in the centre of the political spectrum, and had no difficulty switching allegiances.¹⁴⁰ Dafoe strongly supported Borden during the war, especially during the conscription crisis.¹⁴¹ Dafoe was invited to the Conference to prepare publicity so that the public was kept informed of the actions of Canada’s representatives in Paris.¹⁴² Dafoe strongly influenced what the English Canadian press wrote about the Conference, especially through the paper he edited for Arthur Sifton’s brother, Clifford, the *Manitoba Free Press*.

¹³⁵ Daniel G. Dancocks, *Sir Arthur Currie: A Biography*, (Toronto: Methuen, 1985), 188.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 189.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 188.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 178-179, 188.

¹³⁹ Brown, *Robert Laird Borden*, 87, and Douglas Featherling, 2008, “Dafoe, John Wesley,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0002103>, accessed Jan 18, 2008.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

¹⁴¹ Brown, *Robert Laird Borden*, 87.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 152.

From the outset, the conference that would end the First World War was marked by confusion and disagreement between the participants. Paris had not been the only choice for the location of the conference. Geneva, Lausanne, Brussels and The Hague had all been considered, and discarded for various reasons.¹⁴³ The French Prime Minister was determined to have it in Paris as consolation for France's sufferings during the war.¹⁴⁴ The British were most opposed to this idea. They feared it would be impossible to have a neutral conference in the capital city of one of the countries that had suffered most during the war.¹⁴⁵ This was an example of some of the many disagreements Allied countries had before the Conference had even begun.

The choice of city was to have an impact on the press as well. The press writing in French in France turned against the Americans and Wilson quite bitterly.¹⁴⁶ Throughout the Conference the French media accused President Wilson of theocracy, of being pro-German and of being too idealistic. The press constantly printed jokes ridiculing him.¹⁴⁷ It was not only the French press which was causing discord. According to the British diplomat Harold Nicolson, who attended the conference and wrote a book about it, "the ineptitude of the newspapers published in Paris in the English language has seldom been surpassed."¹⁴⁸

Location also affected how Canadians received news from the Peace Conference. In 1919, 16 of the 20 transatlantic cables were under American control. The Americans

¹⁴³ Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking, 1919*, (London: Constable & Co Ltd, 1933), 76.

¹⁴⁴ Goldberg, *The Peace to End Peace*, 21.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 20-21.

¹⁴⁶ Nicolson, *Peacemaking, 1919*, 78.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

also controlled the cabled news service which reached North America.¹⁴⁹ Inevitably, much of the news arriving in Canada had an American bias and the opinions expressed were often unfriendly to Britain. At the time American newspapers were not particularly interested in hearing both sides of British controversies, looking for unity in British opinion or describing conditions in Britain accurately. According to contemporary commentator, J. Castell Hopkins, the American media appeared more interested in relaying unfriendly stories, rather than the most important ones.¹⁵⁰ In 1916, Hopkins complained that the American press portrayed the Irish Rebellion of 1916 as more important than the British victory at the Battle of Jutland.¹⁵¹ Since it was cheaper to get their news from these news sources, Canadian newspapers sometimes promulgated these biases.¹⁵² Perhaps for these reasons did Borden decide to bring along his own press representatives. Borden was sensitive to public opinion and wanted to make sure that the work the Canadian delegation was doing in Paris received proper publicity.¹⁵³ The Canadian press representatives from both English and French Canada helped ensure that Canadian readers, both English and French speaking, gained a Canadian perspective.

¹⁴⁹ J. Castell Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs*, (Toronto: The Canadian Annual Review, Limited, 1919), 124-125.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 125.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 126.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 125.

¹⁵³ Glazebrook, *Canada and the Paris Peace Conference*, 50-51.

Chapter 2

November 1918 to January 1919 – Preparation for the Peace Conference

The media coverage from the end of the war until the beginning of the conference in late January of 1919 was notable for its euphoric sense. Using religious language that compared the post-war to a religious rebirth and the dawning of a new era, Canadian newspapers outlined what they thought should be accomplished at the Peace Conference. Echoing the Wilsonian hope that an international organization would eliminate the old system of secret treaties and bring diplomacy into the open, the Canadian press emphasized a need for a just peace, an end to the balance of power and the end of conscription. But this idealism was contrasted with a considerable anger towards Germany. The press paid close attention to calls for Germany to pay reparations and to put the Kaiser on trial. Measures were also required to prevent Germany from returning to autocracy. To adopt this new way of doing international affairs, a League of Nations had to be created to ensure that all the changes the Peace Conference had brought about would be fully protected. Of course, the newspapers were not in agreement about all the issues all the time. They had differences in how some things should be accomplished, or in the degree to which the action should be carried out. All of the reporting agreed, however, that Canada deserved representation at the Peace Conference that was proportionate to the role it played in the war.

Coming out of the war offered a definite sense of optimism in Canadian newspapers. *The Globe* noted on the day after the armistice that “tyranny has been dethroned, the world breathes once more the air of liberty, and humanity looks on the

future again with eyes of hope and gladness.”¹⁵⁴ *The News Record* acknowledged that there was “more optimists to-day than there were a year ago,” and that “out of the maelstrom of war a brighter and better day will dawn for the world.”¹⁵⁵ Both newspapers were very optimistic, which was a common trait for Canadian newspapers following the armistice.

This optimism was tied to a view of Canada undergoing a rebirth. The perception in the press was that the country had cast aside its small status and pre-war isolation and was ready to argue strongly that it had earned rights. For the *Free Press*, the country had “earned the right to hold our heads high among the nations of the earth,” and the war “had revealed Canada’s power in the world.”¹⁵⁶ *The News Record* noted that “on the battlefields of France and Flanders this Dominion has been born again.” As a result “the trial increased its self reliance and broadened its vision.”¹⁵⁷ Already, Canada was being portrayed as a new country. A new country that had more experience, was more reliant, and therefore could be expected to have a greater role in the world.

Such a growing sense of self-confidence caused *The News Record* to ask the question: “Would it be wise or foolish to draw into our shells and await developments?” Should Canada return to the way it did things before the war? The newspaper was adamant,

Seeing the tremendously big things which our people have performed in these war years, it would be stultifying to sit down and wait for what time and tide may bring. Indeed they can if they will overcome both new circumstances and new conditions.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ *The Globe*, Nov. 12, 1918, 6.

¹⁵⁵ *The News Record*, Nov. 4, 4, and Nov. 11, 4.

¹⁵⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, Nov. 7, 1918, 11, and Jan. 14, 1919, 2.

¹⁵⁷ *The News Record*, Nov. 15, 1918, 4.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

It was the duty of Canadians to continue on the path they had started during the war.

Historians writing later talked about this sense of rebirth. In 1942, Glazebrook said that Canadians were aware that “physical and moral participation in the war had wakened a new sense of nationalism, and at the same time given them a stake and a rightful place in world affairs.”¹⁵⁹ Stacey stated that “there is little doubt about its effect upon Canadian nationality. The tremendous effort and the tragic losses of 1914-18 did not wholly transform Canada and the Canadians, but they certainly left them rather different from what they had been before.”¹⁶⁰ Both the press and historians talk of this transformation that was tied to Canada’s performance during the war.

Considering Canada’s place in the world inevitably led the Canadian press to consider the evolution of the British Empire. The term ‘empire’ seemed to be going out of use and the press used various names to describe the empire, from “the world-wide Britannic Commonwealth,” to a “league of nations” and as well a “confederation of free nations.”¹⁶¹ The various Dominions within the Empire were evolving towards a more egalitarian position with Britain. The *Manitoba Free Press* saw the Dominions moving away from “Imperial centralization” into a looser union.¹⁶² Australia too, saw a change in the make-up of the Empire. Prime Minister Hughes of Australia saw Dominion involvement in the Peace Conference as “the dawn of a new era,” where the Dominions were tied “only by sentiment to the motherland.”¹⁶³ Hughes likely did not reflect Canadian opinion, but such talk anticipated a changing relationship within the British Empire.

¹⁵⁹ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 30.

¹⁶⁰ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 235.

¹⁶¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 22, 1919, 1.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, Jan. 18, 1919, 11.

¹⁶³ *The News Record*, Jan. 19, 1919, 1.

Amidst the lofty optimism of the post war, the Canadian press had high expectations for the Peace Conference. On November 4, 1918, the *Manitoba Free Press* announced that it was “Essential Peace be Made Permanent.”¹⁶⁴ Former British Prime Minister H. H. Asquith was quoted that “we must attain something better than any of the conventional peaces of history.”¹⁶⁵ *The News Record* acknowledged that this would be the “World’s Greatest Peace Congress.”¹⁶⁶ There was pressure demanding that this peace conference solve many of the world’s problems once and for all. Also, this conference would be unique in that not only was the conference to settle the war, but it was to ensure that nothing similar could ever happen again.

Canadian newspapers also understood that peace would be difficult to achieve. In November 1918, both *The News Record* and the *Free Press* quoted Borden as saying that “the problems ahead were perhaps even more difficult than those faced during the fighting, but Canadians would confront them with equal courage, resolution and confidence.”¹⁶⁷ Canadian newspapers saw the war not as the end of Canada’s participation, but as a transition to another role.

Delays in the opening of the Conference only helped heighten expectations. In November, the *Free Press* speculated that the Conference would begin after the British elections on December 17 that saw David Lloyd George re-elected as British Prime Minister.¹⁶⁸ Soon, however, the papers reported that the Peace Conference may have to be delayed until the political situation in Europe had settled.¹⁶⁹ A few days later *The News Record* was reporting that it was probable that the Peace Conference could not begin

¹⁶⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, Nov. 4, 1918, 3.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *The News Record*, Jan. 18, 1919, 1.

¹⁶⁷ *The News Record*, Nov. 18, 1918, 1 and *Manitoba Free Press*, Nov. 19, 1919, 10.

¹⁶⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, Nov. 15, 1918, 1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 16, 1918, 1.

before early January and that the peace treaty would be signed by the end of February.¹⁷⁰ In January, Dafoe wrote in the *Free Press* that the Conference would probably not begin until February and that “so great is the complexity of the innumerable questions to be dealt with that it is apparent that a final and definite settlement of them all would involve at least a session of six months.”¹⁷¹ While the Canadian press understood that peace would be difficult to achieve, they initially displayed a naivety of how soon it could start and how long it would take. In other matters they were equally naïve.

Beginning in November 1918 and continuing until the beginning of the Conference in late January, newspaper reports debated if and how Canada would have representation. This was because the Canadian representatives had to convince their British compatriots at the Imperial War Cabinet. On arriving in Paris, they also had to convince the other great Allied powers. *The Globe* noted that not all countries recognized Canada as a “co-belligerent” in the war, but would only recognize Canada through Great Britain at the peace table.¹⁷² The *Free Press* reported that President Wilson rejected the idea of the British Empire having so many delegates.¹⁷³ Other Allied countries feared that if the British Dominions were to all have representation, then the British would have a considerable voting bloc that could sway events. It was not obvious that Canada would get representation at the Peace Conference.

Some of the newspapers expressed sadness that Canada might not be represented. However, they were also combative in demanding the right of representation for Canada. *The Globe* lamented as late as December that “there will be no direct representation for

¹⁷⁰ *The News Record*, Jan. 3, 1919, 1.

¹⁷¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 3, 1919, 1.

¹⁷² *The Globe*, Dec. 10, 1918, 1.

¹⁷³ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 16, 1919, 2.

Canada.”¹⁷⁴ The *Free Press* quoted the Unionist cabinet minister Newton Rowell who announced that

It is essential in Canada’s interests that she should be represented at the peace conference and that her voice be heard in the solution of those great problems. The people of Canada will not be content with anything else.¹⁷⁵

Canada’s government and public no longer thought that the British could fully represent Canada’s interests on the world stage.

In December when *The Globe* reported that Canada might have representation, it said that Canada should have no reason to be unhappy “with her place and her share of the proceedings.”¹⁷⁶ On receiving word that Canada would receive two representatives at the Peace Conference, *The News Record* reported with satisfaction that this was good news that showed Canada’s status as a key member of the Allied powers.¹⁷⁷ All the newspapers believed Canada was highly deserving of representation, and believed this important status was deserved from the country’s key contribution to the war effort. *The Globe* argued that if representation was measured by its contribution to the war, then Canada would take precedence over many of the other countries who had been given representation at the conference.¹⁷⁸ *The Globe* believed that Canada deserved representation at the Peace Conference because of Canada’s contribution to the allied war effort. *The Globe* repeated this position on several occasions in future issues. The paper wrote that: “when the record is completed it will probably be established that with a smaller proportionate number of men in the field and of casualties than Great Britain or the other overseas Dominions,

¹⁷⁴ *The Globe*, Dec. 28, 1918, 6.

¹⁷⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, Dec. 3, 1918, 7.

¹⁷⁶ *The Globe*, Dec. 20, 1918, 1.

¹⁷⁷ *The News Record*, Jan. 15, 1919, 4.

¹⁷⁸ *The Globe*, Dec. 28, 1918, 6.

Canada has pulled full weight in the boat.”¹⁷⁹ The *Manitoba Free Press* took a similar line, announcing that the British Dominions, who played such a large role in the war, would probably receive delegates in addition to the British Empire delegation.¹⁸⁰ The newspaper argued that “the right of the Dominions, as direct participators in the military efforts of the Allies, to a voice in the settlement of the terms of peace could have been justified on that basis alone.”¹⁸¹ Referring to Canada’s representation at the Conference as a “right” was a common theme in the *Manitoba Free Press*. In another article it said “this is a matter in which we have a right to be concerned ... we have the right by virtue of our sacrifices.”¹⁸² The language used suggested that not only had Canada earned representation at the Peace Conference but now the country had a right to it. It was not an issue that Canadian newspapers would give up on.

The Canadian delegation in Europe held more realistic expectations, but sentiments back home made the Canadians in Paris more determined to gain separate representation. On December 4, 1918, White cabled Borden that the Cabinet was “even more strongly of opinion than when you left that Canada should be represented.” White wrote that:

council is of opinion that in view of war efforts of Dominions other nations entitled to representation at Conference should recognize unique character of British Commonwealth composed of group of free nations under one sovereign and that provision should be made for special representation of these nations at Conference even though it may be necessary that in any final decisions reached they should speak with one voice; that is this is not possible then you should form one of whatever delegation represents British Commonwealth.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, Dec. 27, 1918, 4.

¹⁸⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 11, 1919, 1.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, Jan. 18, 1919, 11.

¹⁸² Ibid, Apr. 25, 1919, 13.

¹⁸³ *DCER*, vol. 2, 7.

The Canadian Government was of the opinion that because of Canada's war efforts, the country deserved representation at the conference, and if that was not possible, then Borden should be a member of the British Commonwealth delegation. Borden agreed with the members of his Cabinet. At a meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet on December 31, 1918, Borden said that if Canada were not to receive representation at the Peace Conference, then "the result upon public opinion in Canada would be such as he did not care to suggest, or even contemplate."¹⁸⁴ The issue of Canada's representation would not be settled until days before the Peace Conference began on January 20, 1919. The issue would not be resolved as simply as portrayed by historians.

Beyond the issue of Canadian representation were the wider issues to be addressed by the Peace Conference. *The Globe* took a particular interest in the fate of the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II. Canadian newspapers held the Kaiser directly responsible for many of the horrors of the war. *The Globe* called the Kaiser a "menace" and maintained that he would be a problem for the Allies.¹⁸⁵ *The Globe's* editors wrote that the Allies could not risk leaving the Kaiser free and that his fate "will probably be one of the questions for the Peace Conference."¹⁸⁶ *The News Record* called the Kaiser "the arch plotter," and said that it was his "overweening lust for power, [which] plunged the world into this long period of slaughter."¹⁸⁷ *The Globe* claimed he should be tried for "the murder of men, women, and children done to death on land and sea by German soldiers, acting under his orders in

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 19.

¹⁸⁵ *The Globe*, Nov. 13, 1918, 6.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ *The News Record*, Nov. 11, 1919, 4.

defiance of the laws of war and of civilization.”¹⁸⁸ The newspapers also repeated wartime charges and accused German soldiers of committing grievous crimes against civilians.

On December 9, 1918, *The Globe* announced that “Britain Consults Dominions as to Fate of Kaiser.”¹⁸⁹ The newspaper’s editors were excited at a prospect that could offer a larger role for Canada. However, it was not clear that Canada really had any say. The British had proposed a possible trial for the Kaiser at the Imperial War Cabinet meeting of November 22, 1918 and later in the month it unanimously adopted the statement that “the ex-Kaiser should be held personally responsible for his crimes against international law.”¹⁹⁰ Robert Borden, who had been away, recorded in his diary that he was dismayed that the motion was taken in his absence.¹⁹¹ Despite the strength of editorial opinion at home, Borden opposed a trial and preferred to see some resolution from the Peace Conference regarding the fate of the Kaiser.¹⁹²

The Kaiser never did go on trial, but spent the rest of his days in exile in the Netherlands. Article 227 of the Treaty of Versailles charged him with “a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties.”¹⁹³ However, the Dutch refused to hand him over, and the Allies, not wishing to be seen as bullies, decided not to press the issue.¹⁹⁴ He died in 1941, just missing the German invasion of the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁸ *The Globe*, Dec. 18, 1918, 6

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, Dec. 9, 1918, 1.

¹⁹⁰ Seth P. Tillman, *Anglo-American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), 311.

¹⁹¹ Robert Laird Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, ed. Henry Borden (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1938), 874.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 876

¹⁹³ *The Treaties of Peace 1919 – 1923, vol. I, Containing the Treaty of Versailles, The Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye and the Treaty of Trianon*, ed. Lt.-Col. Lawrence Martin, (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924), 121.

¹⁹⁴ Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 164.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 164-165.

Given the Canadian popular view of the Kaiser, it was not surprising that the Canadian press wanted only minimal German participation in the conference. On December 21, 1918, *The Globe* quoted a French government source to the effect that the Germans would have no role in negotiations, would not have an opportunity to have their views heard, and would simply have to accept or reject the Conference's terms.¹⁹⁶ When the Peace Conference convened for its first official session, *The News Record* reported that the Central Powers were not represented and that once the treaty was completed, the German government would be asked to sign it.¹⁹⁷ The paper suggested that the "peace conference will be largely a mere formality as Germany will presumably accept the terms," mostly because it would be "not quite a 'sign there' proposition but almost."¹⁹⁸

The *Manitoba Free Press* took a similar view. It too expected and hoped for minimal German participation in the Peace Conference. In a dispatch on December 23, 1918 the editor of the *Free Press*, Dafoe, outlined the "amazing campaign of propaganda" which the Germans had undertaken to ease the penalties which would be imposed on them.¹⁹⁹ Dafoe also noted that this campaign of propaganda was designed to "spread distrust among the Allies and to foster disagreement. But the impenitence and the hypocrisy of this is shocking to the morals of the Allied peoples."²⁰⁰ Not only did the press expect the Germans to have no representation, but they also saw the Germans as unworthy of representation. An editorial in the *Free Press* noted that German representation would probably be discussed at a preliminary conference of the Allies, but

¹⁹⁶ *The Globe*, Dec. 21, 1918, 1.

¹⁹⁷ *The News Record*, Jan. 18, 1.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Dec. 9, 1918, 1.

¹⁹⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Dec. 23, 1918, 1

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

that it was expected the Germans would do no more than “register their consent to the decisions of the conference.”²⁰¹

Reparations were also on the minds of Canada’s representatives in Europe. Cables between Borden and his cabinet in Ottawa tried to decide on what war claims Canada should make. Sir Thomas White, the Acting Prime Minister and the Finance Minister, cabled Borden in December 1918 that Canada’s total war expenditure up to March 1919 was expected to be \$1,290,000,000. White was aggressive, writing that:

In addition to direct claim in respect of our war expenditure you will not lose sight of claims for indirect damage covering interruption to trade and dislocation of our business generally. We should, I think, also claim punitive indemnity in respect of our casualties. Damages for the Halifax disaster amounting to say thirty million dollars would appear to me to be a fair claim also.²⁰²

Canadian newspapers maintained a lively debate on reparations, for their editors felt strongly that Germany should be forced to pay reparations to Canada. *The Globe* led the way in explaining why Canada should receive reparations just as much as the main Allied powers. While countries like France and Belgium had suffered damage to their territory and many of their important industries, Canada had suffered as well. *The Globe* declared it was reasonable that if Germany was forced to repay to rebuild Northern France and Belgium, then “she should put up the money for the reconstruction of the mercantile marine of Britain and the overseas Dominions, or give up her own shipping in compensation.”²⁰³ Canadian newspapers saw the Peace Conference not only as a way to solve the world’s problems, but also as a way to receive compensation from the Central Powers. Perhaps Canadian newspapers were a bit naive to think that Canada would factor into the discussion for reparations. The *Free Press* was also adamant that Germany be

²⁰¹ Ibid, Jan. 6, 1919, 11.

²⁰² DCER, vol. 2, 8.

²⁰³ *The Globe*, Nov. 1, 1918, 1.

made to pay. In December 1918, the *Free Press* wrote that a way had to be found to “exact from Germany the costs which she ought morally to pay and which the Allies have the clearest legal right to demand.”²⁰⁴ The following month the *Free Press* stated that “Germany cannot be allowed to escape scot-free from her liability to pay a large part at least of the costs of the war into which it plunged the major part of the world.”²⁰⁵ Employing words like “morally,” “legal” and “liability,” the press conveyed reparations as an issue of law and morality, not one of vengeance. Having started The Great War, Germany had a moral and legal duty to repair the damage it had caused. There was also precedent for reparations, for Germany had forced France to pay reparations after the Franco-Prussian war of 1871 and more recently forced Bolshevik Russia to pay reparations in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918.²⁰⁶

The Globe was at its most vitriolic in an article detailing many of the alleged German war crimes. In an editorial published on December 12, 1918, entitled “Make the Beasts Pay,” the newspaper wrote of the atrocities committed against Allied soldiers by the Germans. The editorial explained that

Many of our Canadian lads and tens of thousands of British soldiers have been done to death by murderous jailors in obscure prison camps, mines, and factories where there were no witnesses of the outrages, nor any pitying soul to lighten the discomforts of the dying hours of the victims or speak words of consolation and farewell.²⁰⁷

Therefore,

The beasts who did these things must be punished as individuals, and the nation that permitted them to be done—that stopped its ears to the cry of helpless captives—should be required to pay to the uttermost farthing for the maintenance in comfort of the families of men murdered in camps and prisons, and for the

²⁰⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, Dec. 13, 1918, 13.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, Jan. 4, 1919, 9.

²⁰⁶ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 161, 480.

²⁰⁷ *The Globe*, Dec. 12, 1918, 6.

sufferings and permanent impairment of health of many of the prisoners now returning.²⁰⁸

The Globe editorial invoked a far more personal image of German cruelty to insist on a series of war crimes trials as well as compensation for their captives.

The News Record took a softer approach. The newspaper called for Germany's punishment through reparations, but acknowledged that the Allies should not be too tough in the application of the reparations. *The News Record* wrote that "to mete out justice it will by no means imply a weak peace. Instead it signifies retributive justice which, while providing for reparation, will not crush the enemy."²⁰⁹ It was important that Germany and the other Central Powers be made to pay for the damage they had done, however, it would not do to crush the German state. It was in the best interest of the Allies for democracy to take hold in Germany but that would not happen if Germany was ruined while trying to pay the reparations.

In *The News Record*, there was some confusion as to what Canada would ask for in compensation. It initially reported that Borden would ask that one billion dollars of the reparations received by France and Belgium would be spent in Canada.²¹⁰ However, two days later, the paper corrected this, reporting that Sir Thomas White, the acting Prime Minister, had denied Canada would forgo any indemnity as long as one billion dollars was spent in Canada.²¹¹ The newspapers, as well as the government, appeared uncertain as to what Canada would ask for in reparations.

One of the more interesting ideas reported by the Canadian press was a proposal to give Canada the Danish colony of Greenland. *The Globe* first reported the idea in an

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ *The News Record*, Nov. 20, 1918, 4.

²¹⁰ Ibid, Nov. 23, 1918, 1.

²¹¹ Ibid, Nov. 25, 1918, 1.

editorial on January 8, 1919. It was proposed that if Denmark was to receive the northern German province of Schleswig, which it lost in the 1860s to Germany, the Danes would be willing to turn Greenland over to Canada.²¹² *The News Record* outlined a brief history and economic overview of the island, noting that it had potentially enormous mineral wealth.²¹³ However, *The Globe* was sceptical, noting that it would be an expensive investment and that it be properly investigated before any decision was taken.²¹⁴ *The News Record* on the other hand said that Canada should not be picky, although Newfoundland or the Bermudas would be more attractive to most Canadians.²¹⁵ Now these ideas seem quite far-fetched and it does not appear that they were even on the minds of Canada's representatives in Europe. According to one Canadian historian, these ideas were met with "public indifference and probably, private derision."²¹⁶ Also, neither newspaper presented any kind of evidence for the proposal. *The Globe* did not report the source of this idea and *The News Record's* source was a newspaper correspondent for a British newspaper. The idea was soon forgotten.

The Canadian delegation in Paris sought to balance the sense that Germany be punished with the fear that German economic disaster could lead to Bolshevism.²¹⁷ In a meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet, Sir George Foster declared that "we should demand that the whole costs of the war should be paid by the enemy Powers; but it may possibly be that the enemy Powers are not able to pay that."²¹⁸ Canadian delegates tended towards

²¹² *The Globe*, Jan. 8, 1919, 6.

²¹³ *The News Record*, Jan. 9, 1919, 4.

²¹⁴ *The Globe*, Jan. 8, 1919, 6.

²¹⁵ *The News Record*, Jan. 9, 1919, 4.

²¹⁶ English, *Borden: His Life and World*, 161.

²¹⁷ Macmillan, "Canada and the Peace Settlements," 384.

²¹⁸ DCER, vol. 2, 10.

the softer approach to reparations pushed by the *Manitoba Free Press* and *The News Record*.

While it was important to receive restitution from Germany, it was also important that the Peace Conference prevent Germany from returning to an autocracy. *The Globe* argued that one of the major goals of the Peace Conference should be to “render impossible the restoration of military autocracy.”²¹⁹ The paper feared that the Hohenzollerns could return at the head of a royalist party and retake control of the country.²²⁰ Nine days after the Armistice, *The News Record* stated that there were three main goals of the war: “to destroy militarism; to establish throughout the world the principle of government of the people, by the people and for the people; and to end war as a means of settling international quarrels.”²²¹ The newspapers saw the pre-war German government as opposing these principles which helped to bring about the Great War. Therefore, in order for those goals to be successful and maintained into the future, Germany must be kept from returning to an autocracy.

One of the ways to defeat militarism, as proposed by *The Globe*, was to outlaw permanent conscription around the world. The paper wrote that “conscription has been sometimes the defense of free peoples against despotism, but in the hands of despotism it has been the greatest menace to the world’s liberties.”²²² The ability of despots to call on millions of men to fill the ranks of their armies was a significant threat to the rest of the world. The abolition of conscription was “a very wonderful thing, which if it prevails in the Peace Conference, will lift from Europe a crushing moral and material weight, and

²¹⁹ *The Globe*, Nov. 16, 1918, 4.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *The News Record*, Nov. 20, 1918, 4.

²²² *The Globe*, Dec. 7, 1918, 6.

will more than any other act cut the blight of militarism.”²²³ Again the newspapers were using morals as an argument. The press very much saw the war as a struggle of good against evil, and the Peace Conference as an opportunity to impose Allied morality on the enemy states. Despite the fact that many Allied countries, including Canada, had used conscription during the war, some Canadian newspapers editors argued forcefully that permanent conscription had to be abolished.

Canadian newspapers also used the rhetoric of Wilson’s Fourteen Points to argue against the balance of power in Europe prior to the war. Canadian newspapers argued that it resulted in a continual arms race between the competing powers, while smaller countries had no choice but to follow the orders of the most powerful. For *The Globe*, that “venerable bogey the ‘Balance of Power’ will have no place” in the post-Great War era.²²⁴ As well, “the reign of Law in the domain of International politics must replace the rule of Force.”²²⁵ Rather than the large countries making their own laws, *The Globe* wanted a higher authority that would replace the balance of power. It was important that a new era truly emerge from the Peace Conference.

The News Record agreed with these sentiments. The balance of power as a form of international politics was outdated and “a combination of the big powers having for its object the establishment of a military strength that would overbalance any other possible grouping would constitute a challenge to the rest of the world and result in a continual race in preparations for war.”²²⁶ These apparently were the conditions that led to the Great War and were therefore no longer acceptable. This new system would have the

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid, Nov. 13, 1918, 6.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ *The News Record*, Jan. 11, 1919, 4.

advantage of allowing smaller nations to “lodge a complaint against the greatest power and have it decided on its merits.”²²⁷ Might would no longer mean right, as smaller nations would be able to have their complaints heard.

The paper also saw that in this new system of international politics victorious nations would hold new responsibilities. No longer could they plunder and capture the territory of those they defeated. *The News Record* explained its vision in an editorial:

Drenched with blood and steeped in misery, Europe is convinced that warfare is savagery and the costliest way of settling international disputes. Further it has proved that civilization has advanced too far to permit again a recourse to it to further personal or national ambitions. To make war practically impossible, it is seen that the great nations must concertedly labor to maintain peace.

To succeed in preventing war in the future the balance-of-power expedient and the age-old rule of to the victor belongs the spoils will both have to be abandoned. Right must supercede might in international relations.

The most difficult thing for the victors to do will be to yield the territories they have conquered. Not to do so would render impotent any league of nations. The worsted nations would only remember their losses and prepare for a day of revenge.

The principal allied nation has in this respect taken its medicine, placing permanent peace as a greater desideratum than territorial expansion.²²⁸

It was an extraordinary statement with lofty and perhaps naive notions. The newspaper condemned the old ways and demanded that peace be put at the forefront of all international diplomacy from then on. It also demonstrated some superiority, as though North America had already reached the conclusion that war was savagery. No longer would revenge or recapturing territory be seen as acceptable reasons for war. The most powerful nations in the world could no longer make the laws. It was a very optimistic statement by the newspaper, that victors would give up conquered territory willingly and war could be made impossible. Looking back it is easy to dismiss such notions.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid, Jan. 28, 1919, 4.

However, the greatest war Canadians and the world had ever known had just ended; it would be hard to begrudge Canadian newspapers their optimism.

The *Manitoba Free Press* agreed completely with the other two newspapers. Previous peace treaties had helped cause war as a result of “the arbitrary manner in which the diplomats have been accustomed to dispose of territories and to mark out international boundaries.”²²⁹ The old diplomacy no longer worked and much more care and openness was required in order for peace to be maintained. The paper decided that the war could be repeated if there was a “failure to set up the machinery by which guarantees against the repetition of the events of the past four years can alone be secured is to perpetuate the old anarchy in place of setting up the new world constitution.”²³⁰ This prediction was strangely prescient of what would happen in 20 years. If some “machinery” was not set up in order to prevent previous mistakes being repeated, another war was entirely possible.

Canadian newspapers also discussed the idea of a League of Nations with enthusiasm. The idea of a world organization bringing together all countries of the world had been around for many years. However, the war had prompted various reports and draft constitutions.²³¹ A draft Covenant was presented to the Peace Conference for discussion on February 14, 1919.²³² No Canadian diplomat or politician made a large contribution to its creation, but Canadians paid close attention to its development.²³³ Canadian newspapers agreed that it was a very good idea and something that would usher the world into a new age of diplomacy. The press supported an international league that

²²⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 20, 1919, 11.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, Jan. 24, 1919, 11.

²³¹ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 58.

²³² *Ibid*, 60.

²³³ *Ibid*, 58.

would end the old diplomacy that had failed at keeping the peace in the world. No longer would diplomacy be conducted in secret and peace kept by the so-called “balance of power.” Countries would be beholden to a higher authority that would arbitrate between the nations and solve problems. Small countries could challenge bigger countries and have a chance to win their cases. Countries would be forced to respect the decisions of this higher authority, for if they did not, all other countries in the League would be arranged against them.

The Canadian press generally had high hopes for the proposed League of Nations. Reflecting perhaps the devotions of its publisher, *The Globe* employed a Christmas theme in December 1918: “not since the Angel song echoed above the fields of Bethlehem nineteen centuries ago has the war-weary world had a greater opportunity of securing universal and enduring peace.”²³⁴ The statement highlighted the happiness that the war was finally over, and the optimism that the League of Nations would achieve a lasting peace. *The News Record* was optimistic as well, but did not use as colourful a metaphor. A League of Nations would help “mankind be ushered into a new and better era,” and the very idea has “gripped the minds of the peoples of all nations.”²³⁵ According to Canadian newspapers, not only was Canada entering into a new era, but so was the whole world. Optimism in Canadian newspapers was not limited to the future of Canada.

The Canadian press had a vision of the League of Nations as a kind of arbiter or world Supreme Court. *The Globe* decided that a league, whose members “pledged to the settlement of all disputes between its members by resort to International Courts of

²³⁴ *The Globe*, Dec. 23, 1918, 4.

²³⁵ *The News Record*, Nov. 20, 1918, 4, and Jan. 11, 1919, 4.

Arbitration, must inevitably emerge from the Peace Conference.”²³⁶ It was the only way for peace to be preserved if the League’s members had a higher authority to mediate their disputes. The key was that all nations who were part of the League would agree to respect the decisions of the international arbiter.²³⁷ If nations submitted themselves to the rulings of an arbiter, it would be possible to maintain peace. It would be the last stop for all international disputes and its rulings would be binding. Again, Canadian newspapers were writing of the importance of nations having legal rights under international law. Before, these rights had to do with reparations, but now the press was fleshing out a vision where a permanent body would decide what would be legally required after disputes between nations.

All three newspapers made reference to the question of how rulings would be enforced. *The Globe* was the most specific; it stated that “a League of Nations without an international police force would be as ridiculous as a judge without power to punish the offenders who appear before him.”²³⁸ *The Globe* wanted a League of Nations that was strong enough to enforce peace so that it can stop any nation trying to make war.²³⁹ The newspaper emphasized strength and unity as the keys to enforcing League of Nations rulings. It did not believe that countries would accept the League’s rulings just because it said so. It was strongly in favour of an international police force, although it never elaborated on the make-up of this force.

²³⁶ *The Globe*, Nov. 13, 1918, 6.

²³⁷ *The News Record*, Dec. 24, 1918, 4.

²³⁸ *The Globe*, Nov. 13, 1918, 6.

²³⁹ *Ibid*, Jan. 24, 1919, 6.

The *Free Press* published an article from the *Quebec Chronicle* which called for an international force strong enough to enforce any decrees from the League.²⁴⁰ Again the newspaper emphasized strength and unity; strength to enforce the decisions of the League and unity so that all countries would back the decisions of the League once they were made. Yet again, there was no elaboration on the framework of this international force. Would it be an independent army controlled by the League or would it be made up of the armies of various League nations?

The News Record never called for a permanent force to enforce the League's rulings. Its editors suggested that any country that refused to respect the decision of the League should be considered the enemy of all other states in the League. All League nations should "join their national forces against any nation which makes war in breach of this agreement."²⁴¹ Whenever a ruling was ignored, all the nations would bring their forces together and deal with the truant.

The *Free Press* had an interesting idea concerning the unity of League countries and enforcement of League decisions. In an editorial the paper celebrated the newfound unity of the British Empire and the United States. It declared that "Britain and America will form together the amalgam which will cement the League of Nations and provide it with permanence and authority."²⁴² An alliance of these two nations offered the League the authority and ability to enforce its decisions. The League would not last long if it did not have one of these nations as a member.

Despite the wide press speculation, Canadian delegates preparing to convene in Paris spent little time considering the League of Nations. The Imperial War Cabinet did

²⁴⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, Dec. 2, 1918, 11.

²⁴¹ *The News Record*, Dec. 24, 1918, 4.

²⁴² *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 7, 1919, 9.

form a committee which looked into Dominion representation at the League of Nations. However, Canadian representatives were then concentrating on getting representation at the Peace Conference. Later on the Canadian delegation was concerned about this issue. In a letter to Borden on January 22, 1919, the Justice Minister Charles Doherty wrote that the present draft of the League of Nations covenant was unacceptable as it did not provide strong enough representation for Canada.²⁴³ Borden was determined to see Canada have proper representation in the League of Nations.

The idea of Canadian representation at the League of Nations was mentioned on the front pages. *The News Record* and the *Free Press* reported in January that Canada and the other overseas Dominions had begun an effort to claim separate representation from Britain and to enter the League as any other nation.²⁴⁴ This was a process that had already been started by Dominion demands for separate representation at the Peace Conference. Both newspapers announced that this was another step in recognizing Canada's newfound sovereignty. *The News Record* announced that "this would mean formal recognition by Great Britain of the sovereignty so far as internal affairs are concerned, of Canada and the other Dominions."²⁴⁵ The *Free Press* looked beyond recognition by Great Britain to the whole world: "its acceptance will be a formal acknowledgement by the world for the Dominions existing autonomously within the British Empire and their equality with other nations."²⁴⁶ Both newspapers were beginning to recognize that this Peace Conference meant more to Canada than just bringing peace to the world. They noticed that Canada's

²⁴³ *DCER*, vol. 2, 35.

²⁴⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 22, 1919, 1 and *The News Record*, Jan 21, 1919, 1.

²⁴⁵ *The News Record*, Jan. 21, 1919, 1.

²⁴⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 22, 1919, 1.

constitutional status was evolving. No new laws, or constitutional amendments were being made, but they recognized Canada was not the same as it had been before.

Censorship and the freedom of the press at the Peace Conference was also an issue for which Canadian newspapers offered a strong opinion. *The News Record* was the strongest in favour of complete freedom of the press and no censorship. It presented the view that correspondents at the Peace Conference were not representing their various newspaper or news organizations, but rather were representatives of the people of the world. The newspaper termed correspondents at the Conference “representation for the people themselves.”²⁴⁷ It went on to write that “there is so much depending upon the results of the allied peace conference,” that “the question of admitting the press assumes unusual importance.”²⁴⁸ For *The News Record*,

The correspondents sent thither do not appear as representing a single newspaper or group of newspapers. Theirs is a vastly more important mission. It is jointly to represent the peoples of the associated countries; to keep them informed daily of demands advanced and solutions reached.²⁴⁹

Finally, excluding correspondents “will not only be debarring these from hearing the claims made and subsequent deliberations thereon [sic] but schemes which would not bear the searchlight of public opinion may be advanced.”²⁵⁰ The newspaper held that the press would be the one to keep the politicians honest. *The News Record* wanted the press at the Peace Conference to ensure that at this conference of such importance everything was examined carefully. This was a role for which the press was well suited.

²⁴⁷ *The News Record*, Jan. 17, 1919, 1.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 18, 1919, 4.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

The *Manitoba Free Press* no doubt reflected the position of Dafoe in Paris and had a different opinion on the matter. While it did not believe in complete censorship, it was not in favour of complete freedom of the press either. An editorial speculated that

The distinctions which exist in the phrase ‘freedom of speech,’ are recognized in the discrimination between the ‘discussions’ and the ‘results’ of the discussions. Publicity at the Peace Conference will have general approval, but to imagine that such publicity implies the verbatim reporting of the proceedings at Versailles is to carry the idea beyond even radical limits.²⁵¹

Full publicity was not ideal because it “would prevent full and free discussion of some of the issues by the delegates or that it would tend to increase the length of the discussion and to make appeals to popular sympathy against particular proposals, irrespective of their merits, the order of the day.”²⁵² The newspaper’s editors (including Dafoe) felt that it would not be in the best interest of the people if everything was made public. It did not believe that the people would always know what was right and could be manipulated by politicians to advance their agenda at the Conference. It was more important that those attending the Conference could be free from distraction to concentrate on the issues and that would not be possible if the press was following their every move.

It is important to note that Canadian newspapers were influenced by the American President and the British press on this issue. When mentioning the issue of freedom of the press and censorship, they often quoted the first of Wilson’s Fourteen Points that called for “Open Covenants of Peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.”²⁵³ The press was determined that the politicians and diplomats in Paris would follow through on this promise. The Canadian press was generally in favour

²⁵¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 3, 1919, 11.

²⁵² *Ibid*, Dec. 25, 1918, 9.

²⁵³ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 495.

of openness in international diplomacy. It was their belief that secret diplomacy had helped lead to the Great War. It was important for the press to be able to reveal all that was going on in international diplomacy, so that the public knew the truth.

The Globe wrote that *The Times* of London had warned against censorship of the press, because it could lead to rumours and half-truths.²⁵⁴ *The Free Press* when presenting the case for freedom of the press used the arguments of C. P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*.²⁵⁵ The Manitoba newspaper also reported on January 15 about the protest by American and British newspaper correspondents against a daily communiqué being the only source of information about the meetings at the Conference.²⁵⁶ Canadian newspapers often followed the lead of their American and British counterparts.

On the front page of the December 20 edition, *The Globe* reported that there would be no censorship at the conference. It reported that “*The Times* strongly warns against the rumor that the British reports of the conference are to be censored. The paper says there could be nothing worse than an atmosphere of half truths of which there has been enough already.”²⁵⁷ *The Free Press* pointed out that one of Wilson’s Fourteen Points was “open covenants of peace openly arrived at.”²⁵⁸ There could be no more peace treaties secretly negotiated and imposed on a public that had not been informed of the negotiations. It was therefore the duty of the press around the world to report on the peace conference negotiations. It was also the duty of the press to ignore rumours, and to concentrate on the truth.

²⁵⁴ *The Globe*, Dec. 20, 1918, 1.

²⁵⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 3, 1919, 11.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, Jan. 16, 1919, 1.

²⁵⁷ *The Globe*, Dec. 20, 1918, 1.

²⁵⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 16, 1919, 1.

Canadian newspapers entered the post-war period with a strong sense of optimism. The newspapers were glad the war was over, and hoped that the country's efforts would be rewarded with representation at the Peace Conference. The sense of optimism carried over to the way the press wrote about the upcoming Peace Conference. There was a sense that Canada was being reborn in a new era of international relations. The newspapers had many ideas on how the Peace Conference would be conducted and what would be discussed. Canada should get representation at the Conference and Canadian newspapers should be free to report about it. The press outlined goals that the Conference should attempt to achieve. Germany should pay reparation and the Kaiser should somehow be punished. While the newspapers reflected the opinion that Germany was responsible and must be punished, they at the same time acknowledged the conditions in Europe, such as secret diplomacy, the balance of power and arms races had led to the war. Finally, a League of Nations should be created to maintain world peace and prevent another war from happening.

Looking at Canadian newspaper writing during this three month period, some themes emerge. Big ideas were seldom big on specifics. An international police force garnered comment, but no newspaper offered any ideas on where the troops would come from, who would command them, and where they would be based. The newspapers were so happy about the end of the war that perhaps they ended up being a bit naive about how easy it would be to have a Peace Conference. Peace was of vital importance. The press reflected war fatigue and the conviction that such a war should never happen again. Many of the goals the Canadian newspaper pushed for, such as the League of Nations, an end to old diplomacy, and end to conscription, punishing Germany properly, putting the Kaiser

on trial and a just peace, were all goals which would hopefully prevent war from happening again. Canada should also be rewarded with representation at the Peace Conference for the role it had played during the war. The press believed that Canada's role in the war had earned it representation. It wanted to see Canada continue to be an integral part of the Empire, but also to be able to speak on the international scene outside of the Empire. Hopefully, Canada would be able to contribute and help get rid of the old diplomacy which plagued the world.

Finally, Canadian newspapers were unhappy with how the world had conducted international affairs before the war. The press suspected that these old fashioned strategies had led to the war. The balance of power, secret treaties and old diplomacy were no longer viable. It was important that steps be taken for a new era of international diplomacy, an era that was open and which the press could freely report on so that the world's citizens knew what its leaders were up to.

Chapter 3

February 1919 to June 1919 – The Peace Conference

It was a momentous time for Canada when Parliament opened on February 20, 1919 for the first time in nine months. The leader of the opposition and Liberal leader since 1887, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, had passed away three days earlier. The Prime Minister and several of his top Cabinet Ministers were absent in Europe taking part in a peace conference that had begun to falter. When the Governor General, the Duke of Devonshire, rose to give the speech from the throne it was on a note of sorrow and with some of Canada's most distinguished politicians missing. It was hardly the expected circumstances of the first Parliament since the end of the war.

From February to June 1919, Canada's newspapers continued to have many of the same priorities as they had during the planning months before the conference. However, the optimism of the months immediately after the war was replaced by the realization that there was months of work ahead. The news from Europe had begun to worsen as delegates at the Peace Conference were having disputes and there was unrest across the continent. While Canada gained representation at the Peace Conference, the reality of what this representation meant soon set in. There would be limitations. While Canada's representatives may have been full members of the Conference and members of the British Empire delegation, it did not mean that anyone took into account what they had to say. Also, high hopes about a new era in open diplomacy began to fade, as some countries continued to conduct diplomacy in the old way.

Canadian newspapers were also more conciliatory. While Germany was still expected to play no part in the Conference, Canadian newspapers reported on the hope that Germany would eventually join the League of Nations. Germany must still pay reparations, but some of the Canadian newspapers argued that Germany could not pay what it did not have, and that it was no use wrecking the country over the issue. There was also concern over issues such as Italy walking out of the Conference in late April, and fear the US would fail to ratify the treaty throughout the Conference.

The Throne Speech itself and the comment it generated highlighted the concern that the government needed to turn its attention to domestic issues. The *News Record* noted that Parliament had been neglected for so long. It noted that Parliament:

Has not met since May 24 last and the consequent interrupted interregnum by the cabinet has been unnaturally long and unprecedentedly [sic] complete. It has been the era of order in council. The cabinet has been not only the executive branches of government, in accordance with our recognized place in our system, but by virtue of the War Measures Act, itself passed by Parliament, has also assumed legislative functions formerly confined to the house of commons and the senate.²⁵⁹

While Borden had been trying to raise Canada's international profile overseas, the Throne Speech focussed mainly on domestic issues and the role Canada played in the war. The speech began by praising Canada's accomplishments:

Since the last session of Parliament events have transpired of the highest consequence to the Empire and to Canada. After withstanding with steadfast valour repeated assaults pressed with the utmost vigour and determination, the Allied Forces, taking the offensive in all theatres of action, advanced to decisive and overwhelming victory.²⁶⁰

The Governor-General went on to say that:

In the notable victories leading to the glorious issue accomplished by the arms of the Allies, none of the forces engaged bore a more valorous or heroic part than

²⁵⁹ *The News Record*, February 20, 1919, 1.

²⁶⁰ Governor-General, *House of Commons debates, official report (Hansard)*, (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery), February 20, 1919, 1.

those of Canada, whose achievements throughout the entire war have won imperishable renown for their country. It is most gratifying to be able to state that, in the final and decisive stages of the mighty struggle our divisions in the field were maintained at over-strength, and equipped in the highest degree with all the requirements of modern warfare.²⁶¹

The same reasons the government had used in the previous months to help Canada gain representation at the Peace Conference were also to promote the government's agenda in Parliament.

The Governor General also spoke of an ambitious post-war domestic agenda. The government would present:

A Bill relating to the franchise, with such provisions as are necessary having regard to existing conditions, and providing among other things for effectually enabling women to vote, and conferring upon them the privilege of sitting in Parliament, will be submitted for your consideration.²⁶²

There would also be bills to finance the construction of highways, to assist returned soldiers to set up farms, to introduce farm establishment policies, to promote vocational education, create a Department of Public Health, and to continue the prohibition and importation of alcohol.²⁶³ Many of these issues would be debated by the newspapers in the coming months.

There were several references in the Governor General's speech that touched directly or indirectly on the Peace Conference. The Governor General acknowledged that:

A Conference is now being held at Paris to determine the conditions upon which peace will be concluded. As the decisions of this Conference will be of vital importance to Canada as well as to other parts of the Empire, it is being attended by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, accompanied by others of my advisers.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid, 1-2.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 1.

He did not mention what role Canada would play or what priorities his advisers would have. The importance of this Conference was magnified by the fact that the Prime Minister himself was missing the Throne Speech to attend this conference.

Another item mentioned by the Governor General that related to the Peace Conference concerned Canadian businesses and industries:

After more than four years of war, and notwithstanding the sudden dislocation brought about by the armistice, Canada's industrial, commercial and financial stability has been well maintained. It is the expectation that in addition to business arising from the resumption of public and private undertakings in Canada which were suspended by the war, and needed improvements and betterments throughout the Dominion, Canada will obtain substantial participation in the expansion of export trade following the conclusion of the war, and the liberation of commerce from the restraints which have existed during its continuance. Steps have been taken by my advisers to promote and facilitate such participation.²⁶⁵

The speech emphasized how important it was for Canada to attend the Peace Conference so that Canada's interests were protected and to make sure the country received its fair share of trade and reparations after the war. The Peace Conference was about more than settling the war, for Canada it was also a trade mission. Whether or not Canada would receive reparations itself, the Prime Minister wanted to make sure that reparations paid to other Allied countries would be spent in Canada to ease the nation's finances. The government insisted that Borden be in Paris so that he could boost Canada's visibility and promote the country to other nations who might be looking for trading partners once the peace was concluded. However, the peace needed to be concluded, and therefore it was in Canada's interest to see this take place quickly.

The Throne Speech also emphasized the importance of the Empire:

The deeply loyal and earnest co-operation of the Overseas Dominions and Dependencies with the Mother Country must more firmly cement for all time those ties which bind the Empire in indissoluble union. The spirit born of common

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 2.

sacrifice, suffering and heroic endeavour will also, it is confidently hoped, permanently unite the Allies by the bonds of a great memory and tradition, and effectually promote the formation of a League of Nations which will ensure for all the time the peace of the world.²⁶⁶

The first sentence was intended to calm all those who may have feared that Canada's participation in the Peace Conference and the proposed League would push Canada away from the Empire. Despite Canada pushing for more international recognition, it was important to stress that the members of the Empire remain united. The war was an example of how strong the Empire could be when it worked toward a common goal. Therefore, if all the Allies could come and work together to form a League of Nations, the world would have a much better chance of keeping the peace.

The Throne Speech said a lot about Canada's position after the war. It portrayed the image of a proud Canada that had undergone a devastating war, yet had managed to maintain stability at home. Reforms had to be made to ensure Canada's stability and prosperity. The speech also demonstrated that the government felt that it had good reason to be over in Paris attending the Peace Conference. By submitting the speech for Parliament's approval, they were also getting tacit approval for their actions in Paris.

The Paris Peace Conference officially opened on January 18, 1919 in the Quai d'Orsay.²⁶⁷ *The Globe* was very pleased with the opening of the Conference and what it foretold of future diplomacy. It heralded a new age of "honest diplomacy," and what *The Globe* called the "first inspiring adoption of the new diplomacy of the square deal."²⁶⁸ Using another metaphor, the conference was a place where "powers frankly place their

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 63.

²⁶⁸ *The Globe*, Feb. 3, 1919, 1.

cards on the public peace table for free discussion and deliberation by the nations.”²⁶⁹ The paper was pleased to see this new openness in action.

Yet the conference did not get off to a good start for Canada. Britain, France and the US had decided already that Canada would get two representatives, equal to that of the other small powers. Also, Canada would get a representative on the British Empire panel. The British Empire delegation was made up of four members from Britain, and one member who belonged to a panel on a rotating seat for representatives of the Dominions, and other representatives from Britain. However, the night before the Conference was to begin, without consulting the Dominions, the Big Three decided that Belgium and Serbia would get three representatives. Borden was embarrassed because the press at home had already been told to expect equal representation. He even discussed with Arthur Sifton the prospect of returning home to protest the move. Canada was represented by George Foster and Arthur Sifton at the inaugural session. Borden was to have been the fifth member of the British Empire delegation but he was pushed out at the last moment for the Prime Minister of Newfoundland whose Dominion had not received representation at the Conference.²⁷⁰

The newspapers in late January may have seen the effects of Dafoe’s communications back to Canada. On January 15, Dafoe’s paper reported that Canada would receive “equal status in the conference with the smaller allied nations.”²⁷¹ On January 16, the press reported how Lloyd George had “brilliantly fought” for the Dominions to have equal representation with the smaller nations.²⁷² The opening of the

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Glazebrook, 50. 51.

²⁷¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 15, 1919, 1.

²⁷² Ibid, Jan. 16, 1919, 2.

Conference was then reported on January 20, and nothing was said of the sudden change of representation for Serbia and Belgium. It was a non-event for the Canadian press. The news of Canada's slight was lost amongst the news of the start of the Conference.

The issue that drew the ire of Borden and the Canadian press was the dominance of the five main Allied countries. Borden noticed this on January 21 and wrote Lloyd George complaining that of the 10 days spent in Paris so far, only one meeting of the entire Conference had been held and that all the decisions had been made by two representatives of each of the five large Allied countries. Canada finally had a chance to speak out at a second plenary session. Borden complained about the lack of input smaller nations had and he was curious as to who was making the decisions and by what authority. Clemenceau made a speech in reply which came down to two points: the great powers had called the Conference, and therefore they would control it.²⁷³

In February, *The Globe* reported on Borden's concerns. Reports from Paris confirmed that most of the decisions were being made by Great Britain, the United States, Italy, France and Japan. *The Globe* complained that smaller nations "ought to have more say at Peace Conference."²⁷⁴ The Canadian representatives were having "difficulty in reconciling the war efforts and national status of their dominions with the standing they are accorded at the Peace Conference especially in relation to 'the cabinet.'"²⁷⁵ Canada had standing but it was not getting the opportunity to influence the proceedings.

The *Free Press* was also concerned, reflecting the anxieties of J.W. Dafoe. Norman Lambert, the Secretary of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, and a former staff writer for *The Globe*, wrote that the Canadians had not "enjoyed quite the important place

²⁷³ Glazebrook, 51, 53, 55.

²⁷⁴ *The Globe*, Feb. 12, 1919, 1.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

in the deliberations at Paris that they were given reason to expect.”²⁷⁶ The problem was procedural. While Canada was a member of the British Empire panel, the top powers were only meeting with two members of each country to make the Council of Ten. Canada’s representation was not merely a matter of symbolism for the Canadian press, but it was also a matter of actually representing Canada’s interests as effectively as possible.

Canada’s representatives were not going to settle for merely symbolic representation and newspapers soon began to report on the progress made by Canada on this matter. Not long after the press began to report that Canada was having trouble making its representation count, they began to see evidence that in some ways Canada was making a difference. However, it came not through its representation at the Conference, but through its membership in the British Empire. As a result of a member of the British delegation being absent, Borden was chosen to represent the British Empire at the Council of Ten.²⁷⁷ *The Globe* argued that “it is a precedent undoubtedly, for extending similar privileges to other overseas premiers as occasion arises.”²⁷⁸ *The Globe* wanted to see more power distributed within the Empire to the Dominions.

Canada’s representatives took part in other aspects of the conference in a more direct role, rather than through the Empire. They served on conference committees and examined issues and prepared conference reports. Borden sat on both the Commission for the Greek and Albanian questions, and the Commission on the Russian Question. Sifton sat on the Commission on the International Regime of Rivers, Ports and Railways.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, Mar. 11, 1919, 11.

²⁷⁷ *The Globe*, Feb. 15, 1919, 1.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Glazebrook, *Canada and the Paris Peace Conference*, 138.

Foster, Sifton and Doherty served on two powerful economic committees, the Economic Commission and the Supreme Economic Council.

The *Free Press* thought “the economic interests of all the British Dominions will be well looked after” by these representatives.²⁸⁰ But Canada’s representation caused some consternation back home against fears that Canada’s newfound representation and international stature would dilute the Empire. Perhaps these Canadians were fearful after reading General Currie’s comments, that “in the relations between Great Britain and the Dominions every suggestion of political inferiority must be removed.”²⁸¹ It might seem to some Canadians that Canada was trying to break from the Empire. *The Globe* had no problems in dismissing these critics:

Critics who see in the national status attained by Canada in her decision not to be treated as an underling at the Peace Conference the breaking up of the Empire deserve to rank with the gloomy pessimists who harrowed the hearts of the Allied peoples during the war and have been trying to drive them to the limits of despair during the armistice period.²⁸²

Not everyone was content with the future for Canada that Borden was directing in Europe. But, *The Globe* was not going to back down and had decided that the course chosen by Canada was the right one.

There had been doubts about the usefulness of Borden being in Paris since he had left Canada in November. The *Free Press* wrote an editorial in December dismissing his critics as being out of touch with reality. The centre of world power had moved to Versailles, and Borden was needed there to represent Canada.²⁸³ The problem resurfaced in February, 1919 with *The Globe* wondering “would it not be possible for the Premier of

²⁸⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, Mar. 1, 1919, 1, Glazebrook, *Canada and the Paris Peace Conference*, 138.

²⁸¹ *The Globe*, June 12, 1919, 6.

²⁸² *Ibid*, May 7, 1919, 6.

²⁸³ *Manitoba Free Press*, Dec. 12, 1918, 11.

Canada also to come home and put a little energy into the Administration of Ottawa?”²⁸⁴

While *The Globe* approved of the direction that Borden was leading Canada, the newspaper thought it was time he left Canada’s representation at the Conference to lower representatives. With all the important objectives, such as representation and supporting the other Dominions achieved, *The Globe* asked:

Is there any reason why the Premier of Canada should remain in Paris in what is manifestly a subordinate capacity until the boundaries of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland are arranged, the tangled mess of Balkan intrigue is sorted out, and the last comma is inserted in the Peace Treaty?²⁸⁵

The Globe did not think this was important and that “Canada’s work must be done on this continent. It is a great work, worthy of the best that is in the Canadian people.”²⁸⁶ The newspaper also went on to criticize Borden’s interest in diplomacy and wrote that his resulting absences from the country were not good. *The Globe* argued that Borden had a role to play in Paris, but with that role now over, he should return to Canada. The newspaper saw him as a capable Prime Minister, however, more attention needed to be paid to domestic issues.

When Dafoe returned to Canada in March he was interviewed by the press. In the interview, he dismissed Borden’s critics. Dafoe said:

Criticism of the presence of Sir Robert Borden and his colleagues in Paris—of which there appears to be a good deal in Canada— . . . must be based upon a reluctance to face the realities of the situation. Those who take this view are willing apparently to contact Canada out of the society of nations.²⁸⁷

As well Dafoe said that:

It would be an admission that a colonial status marks the limits of our capacity and desires. There is no domestic question that can be weighed in the same balance

²⁸⁴ *The Globe*, Feb. 1, 1919, 6.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, Mar. 24, 1919, 1.

with the issues that await settlement at Paris; and the Premier of Canada, in my opinion, is precisely where he should be when is in Paris as the chief Canadian representative.²⁸⁸

Borden's choice of Dafoe as the official press correspondent had definitely paid off.

Dafoe was a strong defender of Borden. The arguments over whether Borden should be in Paris or Canada also demonstrated that Canadians may not have seen the Paris Peace Conference as quite as important as later historians have seen it.

The Canadian press had generally a favourable view of Borden. They recognized the important role Borden was playing for Canada at the Peace Conference. Much of his good press was probably due to his appointing Dafoe as official press correspondent. However, the press were not afraid to criticize him when they felt he was not doing the right thing.

According to Canadian newspapers, there was no doubt anymore in Britain about Canada's status. *The Globe* reported that "British statesman at any rate are no longer in any doubt regarding the feeling overseas that their countries are entitled to greater consideration than some whose war efforts they have beaten on any comparison."²⁸⁹ The newspaper pointed out that feeling was high in Canada for greater consideration at the Conference. And again, it was the war effort that had laid the groundwork for this greater consideration. Canada's war effort had done much to improve its image in Britain.

As Canada's war efforts were used to secure representation at the Peace Conference, Canada's representation was used to secure membership as a fully independent nation at the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization. The *Free Press* wrote that "the status of the British Dominions as fixed by the peace

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ *The Globe*, Feb. 12, 1919, 1.

conference has been carried over into the constitution of the league of nations.”²⁹⁰ Not as much effort had to be spent to get Canada representation at the League of Nations, as for the most part it was carried over from its victory to secure Canada representation at the Peace Conference.

Ideas on the League of Nations continued to develop as the Conference began. Woodrow Wilson believed if the League was left until after the Conference, other nations would lose interest. The peace settlement had to be based on the League of Nations principle and he did not want to see it hurried through for the sake of expedience.²⁹¹ Canadian newspapers were greatly interested in the League of Nations and wrote many editorial pieces on its importance. They examined the various issues concerning the League of Nations such as arbitration, enforcement, preserving the peace, what to do with enemy countries and what would happen if the League failed. The League of Nations was debated throughout the months that the Peace Conference was in session. Through that time the tone of the newspapers went from optimistic and naive at the start, to a more realistic and desperate tone in April and May. All three newspapers supported the lofty goals of the League of Nations, but they often failed to provide details on how the many facets of the League would function. Overall, Canadian newspapers saw the League as vitally important to future world peace and something that all countries must do their best to maintain and promote.

The three newspapers were overwhelming in their belief of the importance of the future League. For *The Globe*, the League would “descend to posterity as far more

²⁹⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, Mar. 3, 1919, 4

²⁹¹ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 57.

important than November 11, the day of the armistice,”²⁹² and “there is no doubt that the constitution of the League of Nations is the most important document yet known to human history, and its promulgation, whatever be its ultimate fate, marks an epoch in the record of the world.” *The Globe*, yet again, enjoyed using religious imagery in its descriptions of the importance of the Peace Conference and what it might achieve. The *Free Press* tried to outdo *The Globe* with its praise: “the proposal of a league of nations comes before all other considerations. It is so important that no thoughtful man can refuse to give it his support.”²⁹³ As well, “what Magna Charta did for the English and their descendants the constitution of the League of Nations will do for mankind.”²⁹⁴ Finally, the League was “an achievement certain to be of incalculable value to future generations of mankind.”²⁹⁵ The newspapers were very optimistic in their hopes for the League. Calling it the most important document in human history, and comparing it to the Magna Charta, an important document in British constitutional history, underlined these hopes.

The primary goal of the League was to preserve world peace. Canadian newspapers were very passionate about this subject and believed the League was something that could best accomplish this goal. The *Free Press* put it in very elegant terms:

The war against the antithetic conception of a world dominated by one almighty race has crystallised the sentiment into a powerful desire for an international organization prepared to maintain the independence and secure the safety of each individual state embraced in it.²⁹⁶

²⁹² *The Globe*, Feb. 26, 1919, 6.

²⁹³ *Manitoba Free Press*, Feb. 5, 1919, 1.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, Feb. 17, 1919, 11.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Feb. 7, 1919, 11.

For the newspaper maintaining world peace was very much connected to maintaining the autonomy and borders of individual states. The best option to provide this security was the League of Nations.

This goal of the League was far more important than anything else going on at the Peace Conference. Even near the end of the Peace Conference *The News Record* wrote that “the framing of the peace terms and obtaining the signatures of the belligerents thereto will subsequently dwarf into significance as compared to the establishment of a league of nations to preserve peace.”²⁹⁷ *The News Record* stated the importance of an international organization to preserve the peace, the countries of the world “do not desire to fight another war and therefore see the necessity of getting the leading nations of the world to sign a covenant to preserve peace.”²⁹⁸ It was the League itself that would preserve the peace. The world did not want another war; therefore, countries had a responsibility to sign the League of Nations covenant.

Canadian newspapers also saw the prevention of war as a job of a future peace treaty. Their editors described the representatives and the represented nations as seeing themselves on a mission to bring a lasting peace to the world. On February 25, *The News Record* had the headline: “Nations striving to make war an impossibility.”²⁹⁹ In another article it stated that “The majority of nations are convinced that war should be forever abolished.”³⁰⁰ Canadian newspapers seemed to believe their own rhetoric that the Peace Conference could possibly end war forever.

²⁹⁷ *The News Record*, Apr. 25, 1919, 1.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, June 17, 1919, 4.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, Feb. 25, 1919, 1.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, Feb. 27, 1919, 4.

Arbitration continued to be an important part of the League of Nations for Canadian newspapers into 1919. When the draft covenant of the League of Nations came out on February 13, 1919 and *The News Record* wrote a few days later that:

The kernel of the constitution adopted lies in Article 2, which provides that the British Empire, the United States, France, Italy and Japan and other signatory powers, will hereafter submit to arbitration any differences which may arise between themselves.³⁰¹

If any differences were to arise between countries that they could not resolve themselves, one of the nations had the right to take the dispute to the League to seek resolution. A country's sovereignty would be limited as it now would have to accept the decisions of a higher authority.

This loss of sovereignty did not seem to bother Canadian newspapers. Despite the fact that the Canadian government was trying to expand Canada's powers in Paris with international representation, they were at the same time prepared to lose control over some aspect of their affairs. *The News Record* wrote that "the great gain to humanity has been in the adoption of the principle of compulsory arbitration."³⁰² Canadians newspapers saw the League as an important place to solve international disputes since any country that submitted their dispute would have to accept the decision of the League.

The *Free Press* wrote on February 13 that:

If the country which the decision of the arbitrators places in the wrong does not accept the ruling of the arbitrators and has recourse to arms, not only the forces of the other contending party in the dispute, but the forces of all the nations in a position to help will take up arms against it.³⁰³

This issue was related to Article X of the League of Nations covenant which was under much debate in March 1919. The article stated that:

³⁰¹ Ibid, Feb. 19, 1919, 4.

³⁰² Ibid, May 20, 1919, 4.

³⁰³ *Manitoba Free Press*, Feb. 13, 1919, 2.

The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all states members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Executive Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.³⁰⁴

Glazebrook noted that Borden and the Canadian delegates had three problems with this article. They worried it made all borders permanent and just, and that whoever signed the treaty would be responsible to see that it remained this way.³⁰⁵ This article potentially put Canada in a difficult position of having to guarantee the borders of a Europe that were still seething with turmoil. Doherty submitted a memorandum, and Borden raised the issue at committee meetings. However, no alternative was found, and Canada's concerns were dismissed.³⁰⁶

The Globe, noting Canada's objections suggested that:

No fault can be found with the Canadians for making known their attitude in respect to the article that has been more freely discussed than any other section of the League covenant. But having done so they cannot rest there.³⁰⁷

The three newspapers did not seem particularly concerned about the potential difficulties that could arise from the proposed article. However, they were anxious that if Canada was to make any protest, that it should do its best to prepare an amendment. It also appeared that *The Globe* honestly believed that Canada could make a difference with the League covenant with further efforts.

The idea that the League of Nations opened the possibility of accepting the rulings of a higher power raised considerable comment. The *Free Press* wrote that "the covenant of the League of Nations represents a long advance on the older conception of the

³⁰⁴ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 67.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 68.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 70.

³⁰⁷ *The Globe*, Mar. 27, 1919, 4.

inviolability of the rights of sovereignty enjoyed by a nation; but any large surrender to an international body of autonomous power is still a long way in the future.”³⁰⁸ The covenant would break new ground in its move towards restricting some rights of nations. However, the *Free Press* believed that any large surrender of rights was still far off. The paper was not very concerned that nations who joined the League would lose many national rights. It was interesting though, that the newspaper would be so eager to gain greater equality within the Empire, while prepared to surrender rights to the new League of Nations.

All three newspapers supported the idea that force could be needed to enforce League decisions. The *Free Press* wrote that “at the present stage of the world’s development, the possibility of employing force must always be the moral authority behind the League’s findings.”³⁰⁹ In order for the League’s decisions to have a moral backing, they must be enforceable. If League decisions had no enforcement mechanism then no one would abide by its decisions. The newspaper saw the League as gaining its authority from morality. Such an authority had to be enforced.

Some countries, the French in particular, wanted some kind of international army or world police. France’s aim was to have a huge international army stationed on their soil, the strategic centre of Europe, to protect it from future aggression.³¹⁰ According to Canadian newspapers France saw itself as the principle victim of the war, and had the most to lose by a peace treaty that failed to give it adequate protection. However, the Canadian press never offered any detailed explanations on how an international army would work or how it would be formed. It suggested that there were positive things that could happen as a result of creating a world police force. *The News Record* wrote that “by

³⁰⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, Apr. 15, 1919, 11.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid*, May 6, 1919, 1.

³¹⁰ *The News Record*, Feb. 13, 1919, 1.

having a world police force, it will enable the member nations to reduce their present armaments, since they will not be building against each other.”³¹¹ With less need for countries to maintain standing armies to protect their sovereignty, countries could reduce their armed forces and see a decrease in armaments around the world.

The view was that enforcing the League’s decisions would make the world become a much more peaceful place. If the League was able to arbitrate between countries, to make judgments, and if necessary was able to enforce the judgement, the League would become the ultimate court. *The Globe* decided that if countries joined the League and accepted its decisions, eventually, it would become “the court of last resort of the nations, with ample authority and power to carry its judgement into effect.”³¹² No country could defy the League because it could enforce its decisions resulting in all countries respecting it as the final court.

It was of primary importance that this League be made up of as many nations as possible. An all-encompassing international organization could contribute much more than the Great Powers working together. *The Globe* wrote that the League would “exert a far more powerful influence in the direction of world peace and the enforcement of international law than could any voluntary concert of the Great Powers.”³¹³ Global cooperation was important. The Great War had shown what could happen if all nations did not work together, and *The Globe* honestly believed the League could make a difference. It may be easy to say the newspaper was naive in its opinions at this later date, but at this time there was no sign that the United States would not join the League.

³¹¹ Ibid, Feb. 19, 1919, 4.

³¹² *The Globe*, Apr. 15, 1919, 6.

³¹³ Ibid, Feb. 28, 1919, 6.

There were a number of things that Canadian newspapers thought the League should do to make it more meaningful. One was to incorporate into the League the former enemy countries such as Germany, Austria and Hungary, as well as Russia. *The Globe* stated that “if there is to be a League worthy [of] the name these countries cannot be barred out indefinitely.”³¹⁴ It also wrote that “if the world ever is to emerge from the horrors of recurring wars there must eventually be a real League of Nations, which shall include Germany and Russia.”³¹⁵ For *The Globe*, the League would not be “worthy” or “real” unless these other countries joined. It could not truly be a League of Nations until all countries, especially the former enemy powers in Europe became members. Without them, the League had the potential to soon become irrelevant.

The News Record also recognized the importance of the League, especially of its importance to the Peace Treaty. When news came out in June that the American Senate wished to remove the League Covenant from the Peace Terms, the paper was upset. It wrote that “the League of Nations covenant is the keystone of the arch. Remove it and the arch will fall.”³¹⁶ The Covenant of the League of Nations would, in the opinion of the newspapers, guarantee world peace. Without the League to oversee the peace terms, the newspaper’s editors feared that the entire exercise would collapse.

The *Free Press* examined in great depth what would happen if the League failed. First, the new League had to be adaptable to change. The League needed to “grow and adapt itself to rapidly changing conditions from the very outset; otherwise it will fail.”³¹⁷ The advance to war in 1914 proved this point. The constantly changing situation and

³¹⁴ Ibid, Mar. 27, 1919, 4.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ *The News Record*, June 17, 1919, 4.

³¹⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, Mar. 12, 1919, 11.

involved powers provided no stable situation. The *Free Press* realized that the League's success was not guaranteed, despite it being such a great idea. This was in stark contrast to the newspaper's earlier highly optimistic comments about the League.

Secondly, the Canadian newspapers had the opinion that the League could also fail if it did not have the support of all member nations. The League would be "a living organism only if its initial constitution commands general support; to travel too fast and to fly too high will result in failure."³¹⁸ The *Free Press* carefully provided some ways on how the League could fail, but it also stated why the League must not fail:

The attempt to set up an international society; however crude and imperfect at its inception must not fail. Reversion to the old state of affairs would be an appalling disaster. It would mean the tearing up of international law at a time when every nation is confronting internal conditions which would make another world-conflagration by no means unlikely in the absence of all restraint.³¹⁹

There was little optimism to be found in the language used by the *Free Press*. The newspaper was desperately worried that all Canadians had fought for would be lost. It even acknowledged that the League of Nations was not perfect, but was the best solution under the increasingly dire circumstances facing the Peace Conference. The lofty optimism of the late fall and early winter was not longer evident.

The newspapers quoted several representatives at the conference who believed in the importance of ending war. At the start of the Peace Conference, the Canadian representative, Charles Doherty, was quoted as saying: "the prevention of war is not the concern of governmental power alone. It is in the interest of humanity itself."³²⁰ One month later, Lord Robert Cecil, one of the British representatives and one of the first to develop the idea of the League of Nations, was quoted as saying:

³¹⁸ Ibid, Mar. 3, 1919, 11.

³¹⁹ Ibid, Mar. 12, 1919, 11.

³²⁰ *The News Record*, Feb. 3, 1919, 1.

But after all nothing that is worth doing in this world can be done without sacrifice and if any real change in the present international anarchy is to take place it can only be because the nations of the world are so convinced of the horrible evils of war that they are ready to risk something to prevent its occurrence in the future.³²¹

The two representatives both presented the idea that it was in humanity's interest to bring an end to war. Humanity had to realize how evil war was and had to make the necessary sacrifice to end it. Throughout the Conference there were delegates pushing for this lofty goal.

During discussions at the Peace Conference in February, *The News Record* noted that one idea that was constantly brought forward was “not to frame rights under which war can be humanely conducted but to render war impossible.”³²² While certain delegates at the Conference only wanted to prevent war, *The News Record*, wanted to end it permanently. The editorialists at the *Free Press* became upset when it seemed certain newspapers within Canada and the US were forgetting why delegates from their countries were meeting in Paris. It wrote “there are bigger issues afloat than that of the nice apportionment of honor won. There is the peace and the safety of the world.”³²³ There was anger that representatives in Paris seemed more interested in arguing over whose armies were the most responsible for ending the war. This was not the most important thing to be debating the newspaper admonished; the world had to focus on peace.

Reparations continued to be discussed as the Conference progressed. Before the Conference began, the newspapers were full of rhetoric demanding German blood, and discussing the specifics of what Canada may get in reparations. After the Conference began, the discussion became more realistic. Canadian newspapers were eager to see that

³²¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Mar. 11, 1919, 11.

³²² *The News Record*, Feb. 25, 1919, 1.

³²³ *Manitoba Free Press*, Feb. 1, 1919, 11.

those responsible for starting the war pay for the damage they caused. They discussed how much had to be paid and what form it would take. Unlike the previous December, they also showed a lack of interest in whether or not Canada would receive reparations. It was important that those countries who suffered the most receive the majority of the reparations. There were problems though; the major dilemma for the newspapers was how Germany would pay without having its economy benefit from the industries being produced.

For *The News Record* “the first question to be determined is what Germany owes and then what she can pay.”³²⁴ It had to be determined not only “what Germany should pay in the way of damages but what she is able to pay and how she is to earn the money with which to pay.”³²⁵ It would be illogical for the Allies to merely demand payment without determining exactly how Germany should pay it, and where they should get it. The newspaper noted that:

Another fact contributing to the situation is that early statements regarding indemnity claims were based on the idea of taking territory in lieu of money. Since it has become evident that the old “grabbing” policy will not be tolerated, an adjustment of ideas has become necessary.³²⁶

The Allies had new standards to live by, and could not simply grab territory to satisfy reparations. Wilson’s Fourteen Points had laid down how the Allies would deal with territory after the war and if they wanted to maintain the respect of the world, they had to follow them. The Allies would have to come up with a more civilized way of having the enemies pay reparations.

³²⁴ *The News Record*, Feb. 24, 1919, 1.

³²⁵ *Ibid*, Feb. 7, 1919, 1.

³²⁶ *Ibid*, Feb. 12, 1919, 1.

Reparations provided problems for the Allies. How could they make the Germans pay without seizing territory or allowing their economy to benefit? The *Free Press* wrote that “the problem of reparation and restitution is one of the most difficult which the Peace Conference is called upon to solve.”³²⁷ Both *The Globe* and the *Free Press* were worried about Germany benefiting from reparations. The *Free Press* wrote:

Public sentiment has demanded that Germany should pay for the war. But blood cannot be got from a stone; and it is not desired that German industry should benefit by any over-stimulation of industrial production to the detriment of its commercial competitors in the world’s markets.³²⁸

The Globe took a harsher stand, unhappy that Germany had the possibility of making any revenue, “Germany does not grow cash, and she cannot discharge her obligations unless she sells her goods. The fact is unpalatable, but it is unassailable.”³²⁹ The problem was clear; if Germany were to sell its goods in order to make money to pay the Allies, there was a risk that German industries might compete with Allied industries, and that the German economy would be over-stimulated so that it could pay all the reparations. Although the Allies wanted to receive reparations from Germany they were not comfortable with seeing the German economy, thus the German people, benefit in any way while the Allies were being paid their just due.

To the *Free Press* it was important that Belgium and France benefit from the reparations. The newspaper declared that “France and Belgium must be rehabilitated. The labour and cost of that work ought to be imposed on those who planned and carried

³²⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, Feb. 22, 1919, 11.

³²⁸ *Ibid*, May 9, 1919, 13.

³²⁹ *The Globe*, Mar. 15, 1919, 6.

out this stupendous crime.”³³⁰ The paper understood Belgium and France’s demand for reparations:

The bitterness underlying the demand of the French and Belgians for restitution and reparation by Germany is scarcely comprehensible to people who have not seen for themselves the devastated areas of northern France and Belgium.³³¹

Belgium and France had suffered the most and were therefore the most entitled to reparations. The damage done to their countries was far greater than that inflicted on any other.

In the end, Canada did share in the monetary reparations received, although only a small portion of this was ever paid due to Germany defaulting.³³² The reporting in the Canadian press alternated between the hard-line approach of *The Globe*, and the softer approach of the *Free Press* and *The News Record*. For the hard-liners, reparation was more about vengeance for individual cruelty, while the softer approach saw it as a more abstract legal and moral issue.

Secret treaties and old diplomacy were a topic often talked about in Canadian newspapers at the time. Secret treaties were a “hindrance to the peace”³³³ and an “injustice”³³⁴ that were no longer acceptable in the post-war era. The dissolution of these treaties would be an important goal of Canadian newspapers. Again, Canadian newspapers were using language from Wilson’s Fourteen Points in their arguments for what the world should be trying to accomplish at the Peace Conference.

For the newspapers, the elimination of secret treaties by the Peace Conference would be a great triumph. *The Globe* wrote in February about how the “old order is on the

³³⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, Feb. 22, 1919, 11.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 121, Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 480.

³³³ *The News Record*, Apr. 10, 1919, 1.

³³⁴ *The Globe*, Mar. 15, 1919, 1.

wane,”³³⁵ and how eliminating secret treaties would be a “triumph over old intrigue.”³³⁶

The Globe saw secret treaties as being “old” and part of something that was dying out. It was also a good thing that they were disappearing, because they were associated with devious methods and with war.

Canadian newspaper coverage of secret treaties re-emerged in late April and May. This was due to Italy walking out of the Conference as a result of being told that the Treaty of London, signed in 1915, and kept secret during the war would not be honoured in the final peace treaty. *The News Record* did not like secret treaties; it was “evident that these had to go before a new and clean leaf could be turned.”³³⁷ This meant that “diplomats and their underhanded schemes will eventually disappear. Imperialism was having its supply of gasoline cut off.”³³⁸ Imperialism, which Canadian newspapers believed had been kept alive by the secret conspiring of diplomats, would no longer be acceptable and could not be used as means to an end for those countries wishing to extend their influence. Diplomats could no longer conspire and diplomacy would come out into the open.

The end of the old diplomacy and secret treaties was also associated with the coming of the League of Nations. For the *Free Press*:

This repudiation of the time honored, hoary system of secret understandings is one of the features of the League of Nations which mark it, despite many compromises with the old order, as a great step forward along the long road to a stable world. For secret dickerings has been to the old diplomacy the very breath of life.³³⁹

³³⁵ Ibid, Feb. 3, 1919, 1.

³³⁶ Ibid, Feb. 15, 1919, 1.

³³⁷ *The News Record*, Apr. 25, 1919, 4.

³³⁸ Ibid, May 20, 1919, 4.

³³⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Apr. 26, 1919, 11.

The News Record saw “the acceptance of the principle on which a League of Nations rests, will eradicate secret treaties and the old schemes of alliances between the great powers to maintain the balance of power.”³⁴⁰ The League of Nations would bring diplomacy into the open. If diplomats spent too long arguing over treaties and the fine print, the people would know. The League of Nations stood for a principle which would no longer accept secret treaties and secret alliances.

Unfortunately, the newspapers noted that secret diplomacy and treaties were not dead despite *The Globe*’s assessment at the start of the Conference. In March, the *Free Press* noted that “the procedure at the Peace Conference has been the reverse of democratic and has smacked of secret diplomacy.”³⁴¹ The newspaper was concerned about the monopoly of power being held by the Great Powers, and that despite their assurances of an open peace, were conducting secret negotiations. It appeared that despite a promising start, the move towards open diplomacy was backsliding and losing momentum.

There were other problems. Despite countries’ efforts to have an open Peace Conference, the proceedings were troubled by old secret treaties. The past haunted the representatives and made it difficult for them to adopt the new ways. The *Free Press* noted in April that secret treaties kept “turning up at Paris at the most inconvenient and inopportune times.”³⁴² All kinds of treaties signed by the powers before and during the war concerning Italy, the Balkans and the Middle East, would not die. Many nations felt that they had been promised things from these treaties, such as the Italians and the Treaty

³⁴⁰ *The News Record*, Apr. 25, 1919, 4.

³⁴¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Mar. 26, 1919, 14.

³⁴² *Ibid*, Apr. 26, 1919, 11.

of London, and were loathe to give them up. It turned out not everyone was as excited as Canadian newspapers about discarding old treaties.

Major problems also arose at the conference as a result of the Italian delegation. Macmillan wrote that the argument between the Italians and the rest of the Council of Four was over not only territory, but also principle. The Italians stood firm on the old diplomacy while the Americans on the new.³⁴³ In the treaty of London signed in 1915, the Italians had been promised parts of Austria-Hungary, a stretch of the Dalmatian coast, the Dodecanese Islands, parts of the Ottoman Empire if it were to disappear and a protectorate over Albania.³⁴⁴ The problems developed with the French and British who considered the Treaty of London an embarrassment and with the Americans who considered themselves not bound by any secret treaties.³⁴⁵ The quarrel culminated on April 24, 1919, when the Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando walked out of the Conference and returned to Italy. The main headline on the *Free Press* read “Italy Withdraws from Peace Table as Result of the Adriatic Deadlock.”³⁴⁶ On the same day, *The Globe*, separated its main page in two, with Wilson on the left and Orlando on the right and wrote in detail about the disagreement.³⁴⁷

The Canadian press noted that the Italian problem was complex and could have disastrous results for the conference and for Europe. The *Free Press* wrote that the Italian problem was “as complex and insoluble as the Balkan problem to which it is closely allied.”³⁴⁸ *The Globe* foresaw revolution in Italy as a result of Italy’s claims not being

³⁴³ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 281.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 283.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 284-286.

³⁴⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, Apr. 24, 1919, 1.

³⁴⁷ *The Globe*, Apr. 24, 1919, 1.

³⁴⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, Apr. 28, 1919, 13.

met.³⁴⁹ Allied leaders would have to treat the problem very carefully and do their best to solve it. *The Globe* wrote that “it will be a real disaster to the cause of universal peace if the Italians persist in their present attitude.”³⁵⁰ The newspaper did not want the delegates getting sidetracked from the most important issue, which was peace.

While the Peace Conference had begun with optimism and hope, it did not take long for a disappointment to settle around Paris and in the Canadian newspapers. Many problems developed and the Peace Conference slowed with representatives arguing over seemingly trivial matters. One of the strongest proponents of the League of Nations, the American President Woodrow Wilson, appeared to be losing the support of Congress and it appeared as though the US would not even ratify the treaty. Wilson was at odds with Congress, and refused to compromise to appease some of the moderate republicans.³⁵¹ Germany was enduring domestic difficulties and was proving to be difficult to deal with, threatening to refuse to sign the treaty. Finally, domestic problems in Canada escalated into the Winnipeg General Strike, which actually saw the *Free Press* cease production for a few days. The euphoria from the Allied victory in the war had died off, and reality had begun to sink in revealing many problems and a Peace Conference that might not solve them.

The United States was an important country at the Peace Conference. President Wilson had pushed many of the ideas which motivated the Conference. The US was also seen by Canadian newspapers as a moral authority and a country that could mediate the competing interests at the Conference. The creation of the League of Nations was very important for the Conference’s success. On February 4, *The News Record* had the

³⁴⁹ *The Globe*, Apr. 23, 1919, 6.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Apr. 25, 1919, 6.

³⁵¹ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 152.

headline: “Success of League depends largely on U.S.” splashed across the front page.³⁵² *The Globe* noted that “Paris awaits anxiously attitude of U.S. on League of Nations.”³⁵³ The Peace Conference depended to a large part on the US, and was very sensitive to its mood. Its economics and military strength made it a strong country, one that could convince other countries to follow its lead.

The importance of American leadership was highlighted in several papers. *The News Record* wrote that “it is absolutely vital that America shall assume a moral leadership in the league’s affairs.”³⁵⁴ It was important for the US to lay out ideas on how international society will now function. *The News Record* was pleased with how the US was providing this leadership. It noted that “under the old scheme of things, it could have bargained for its assistance and obtained a large slice off some continent.”³⁵⁵ Rather, the US “enunciated the principle that there should not be a division of spoils and proposed that it be a peace of justice, with provisions for the formation of a league of nations to preserve the peace of the world.”³⁵⁶ The news paper wanted to see more leadership that would set the agenda for a freer and more peaceful world.

As the Peace Conference continued, there was fear that the US would abandon the role it had taken for itself on the international stage and return to isolation. This problem especially came to the forefront in late February when Wilson returned temporarily to the US. Wilson made a rousing speech in Boston which *The Globe* described as:

Throwing down the glove of defiance at all Senators and others who oppose the League of Nations, and challenging them to combat with him, President Wilson

³⁵² *The News Record*, Feb. 4, 1919, 1.

³⁵³ *The Globe*, Feb. 28, 1919, 1.

³⁵⁴ *The News Record*, Feb. 4, 1919, 1.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, Feb. 27, 1919, 4.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

signalized the first day of his return in a way that gave the deepest comfort to those friends of his who wanted him to make a fighting speech.³⁵⁷

The Globe wrote that Wilson's enemies in Congress had declared war on the League of Nations.³⁵⁸ There was a segment of Congress that was highly opposed to the United States joining the League of Nations. *The News Record* quoted Senator Poindexter from Washington as asking whether:

To surrender to an international council and body of delegates those high functions of sovereignty which heretofore we have exercised for ourselves, and to rest in the jurisdiction of an international league the determination of our armaments, the decision of peace or war, even in the most vital questions affecting our honor, integrity, or material welfare?³⁵⁹

The serious problem for those opposing the League of Nations was the fear that the US would be giving up a substantial portion of its sovereignty as a membership fee. *The Free Press* saw American opposition to the League of Nations differently. The newspaper wrote that opposition:

Comes from two classes of people. One is composed of those who have been, openly or secretly, opposed to the participation of the United States in the war. The other consists of those who, having enthusiastically aided in the defeat of the Prussian menace would now have the United States retire into its former state of detachment from European affairs.³⁶⁰

Rather than sovereignty it was more an issue of either having opposed the war in the first place or isolationism. Nevertheless, the *Free Press* was not impressed with the argument.

The News Record rejected Senator Poindexter's argument as well. The newspaper described various national laws that most countries have and wrote that:

It follows that if it be wise to curb, disarm and control would-be disturbers of the peace in the national arena, there should be an international code, supported by the

³⁵⁷ *The Globe*, Feb. 25, 1919, 1.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

³⁵⁹ *The News Record*, Feb. 27, 1919, 4.

³⁶⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, Feb. 25, 1919, 11.

family of nations, preventing any nation from encroaching on the rights of others.³⁶¹

If citizens of countries were to have national laws, then there was no reason why countries should not have to abide by international laws. Canadian newspapers wanted to see national sovereignty restricted in the name of peace, and they were not afraid to take on the United States in their fight for it.

If the US were to fail to ratify the peace treaty, the effects would be disastrous according to Canadian newspapers. If the United States Senate rejected the treaty, “it is probable that the league would fall to the ground” wrote *The News Record*.³⁶² American support was necessary for the League to survive. Without one of the most powerful nations of the world, the League would be useless. For *The Globe*:

The rejection of the treaty of peace would mean that there would be no peace unless the United States stooped to make a separate agreement with the enemy, an alternative which would be scorned by the patriotic self-respect of the American people.³⁶³

The paper seemed to see possible American dismissal of the treaty and the League not so much as a result of the lack of public support, but of its politicians. They believed that Americans favoured the League and that they would reject any attempt to return America to its isolation.

By June, *The News Record* was still worried over American participation in the League of Nations. The newspaper believed that there was considerable opposition in the US to the League.³⁶⁴ In June, Republicans in the US Senate had introduced a motion to

³⁶¹ *The News Record*, Feb. 27, 1919, 4.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ *The Globe*, Feb. 25, 1919, 6.

³⁶⁴ *The News Record*, June 4, 1919, 4.

have the League Covenant separated from the peace treaty.³⁶⁵ The newspaper was adamant that “The United States, having participated in the Great War, cannot go back to its position of isolation from world affairs.”³⁶⁶ Canadian newspapers wanted the US to understand that it had a responsibility to the outside world. Canadian newspapers were very eager for US participation in world affairs. It seemed as though that since Canada was taking a greater role in world affairs, the Canadian press felt that the Americans should follow suit.

Another troubling issue that arose during the Peace Conference was that of racial equality, an issue that had been raised by the Japanese. Japan wanted racial equality established by a clause in the Covenant to the League of Nations. The amendment as proposed by the Japanese diplomat Baron Makino read:

The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nationals of States members of the League equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality.³⁶⁷

This was a new issue for peace conferences, and many of the other nations found it troubling. The main opposition came from the US and Australia. The British on the other hand, hoping to maintain an alliance with Japan, were more conciliatory. However, when the New Zealanders joined the Australians in opposition, the British were forced to concede, and oppose the clause proving that the Dominions did have influence in Paris.³⁶⁸ However, for newspapers in Canada the real issue was immigration.

The racial equality issue showed that discrimination was alive and well in Canada. Canadian newspapers constantly referred to “the Japs.” The main problem for Canadian

³⁶⁵ Ibid, June 17, 1919, 4.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 317-318.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, 319.

newspapers was that the racial equality clause could cause Canada to lower its immigration barriers to the Japanese.³⁶⁹ It seemed important that Canada maintain its control over its immigration policies, and to discriminate against who they like. The *News Record* wrote:

The white races are willing to trade with Japan on equal terms; to interchange ideas and to promote good relations between the races but knowing East is East and West is West is [sic] [to be] convinced that White cannot assimilate Brown. To open America's doors to Japanese immigration would, presently at least, be unwise and probably lead to international strife.³⁷⁰

The *Free Press* had the opinion that public opinion simply would not allow any flexibility on this issue.³⁷¹ The issue for the Canadian press was not so much about equality, but about Canada maintaining control of its immigration policies. The underlying fact was racism, but it was turned into an issue affecting Canada's sovereignty.

Canadian newspapers just did not believe that Japan was ready to be treated as an equal. *The News Record* wrote that "Japan is permeated with Imperialism. It still believes in false doctrines that might makes right and that the weak are the natural prey of the strong. They breed like rabbits and their own country is overpopulated."³⁷² The newspaper also wrote that "the Jap may be the equal of any other race, but he is 50 years behind the Canadian and American in social and industrial development."³⁷³ The newspaper was trying to focus on reasons why the Japanese were not an equal race. It was almost as if they were trying to prove that it was not about the colour of their skin. The newspaper felt that the Japanese were not socially, politically, or culturally ready to be treated as an equal.

³⁶⁹ *The News Record*, Mar. 24, 1919, 4.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid*, Apr. 25, 1919, 4.

³⁷¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, Apr. 16, 1919, 15.

³⁷² *The News Record*, Apr. 25, 1919, 4.

³⁷³ *Ibid*.

The signing of the Treaty of Versailles was not greeted with joy by Canadian newspapers, but rather with relief. Finally, the war was over. “War has definitely ended with signing of peace,” announced *The News Record*.³⁷⁴ The announcements in the newspapers after five months of deliberations were almost anti-climactic. The *Free Press* had no big headline, only announcing at the top of a side column that “World Peace Signed in historic Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.”³⁷⁵ The newspaper wrote that the sentiment in the room was one of relief, and that Doherty, Sifton and Foster had signed the treaty for Canada. This was strange, since Foster had already returned to Canada. True to form, *The Globe* chose to show some religious imagery and quoted Psalm 147 13:14 as its headline: “For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates . . . He maketh Peace in thy borders.”³⁷⁶ While *The News Record* chose to keep its article on the signing optimistic, both the *Free Press* and *The Globe* wrote pessimistically. At the top of the article, *The Globe* wrote about how the “Hun” delegates would have never signed if they had known how they would be treated, how the Chinese delegates were absent, how the South African representative General Jan Smuts registered a protest and how Clemenceau warned the Germans about respecting the treaty.³⁷⁷ After the long war and Peace Conference it was a rather depressing end.

Despite Wilson’s leading role in its development, the US never did join the League. Wilson tried his best to ensure that the League passed through Congress, but illness brought on by exhaustion and his unwillingness to compromise assured its

³⁷⁴ Ibid, June 28, 1919, 1.

³⁷⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, June 30, 1919, 1.

³⁷⁶ *The Globe*, June 30, 1919, 1.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

doom.³⁷⁸ The Canadian delegates who ended up signing the treaty on June 28, 1919, were Doherty and Sifton. The representatives for the United Kingdom signed for the British Empire, followed by the dominion representatives and India signing for their respective countries.³⁷⁹ Whether this was equal representation or not, was up for debate. The *Free Press* merely mentioned that two of Canada's cabinet ministers had signed for Canada.³⁸⁰ There was no debate in the newspapers as to whether this meant Canada was equal to Great Britain, or any kind of celebratory article suggesting Canada had won something.

Borden had promised that the treaty would be submitted to Parliament to ensure that it was "more than an empty formality, it must be done before ratification."³⁸¹ When Borden presented the treaty in the House of Commons on September 1, 1919, he admitted it was not perfect, but it was the best that could be expected under the circumstances.³⁸² Questions of Canada's status lingered, for the debate focused on whether Parliament even had the authority to approve the treaty when it was the job of the King.³⁸³ Despite all of Borden's efforts in Paris, there was still debate about Canada's status. It was the same fight Borden had been having first in London in the fall and winter of 1918-1919 and then in Paris in the winter of 1919. However, now he was having the fight at home with the opposition. Finally, on September 12, 1919, following a vote in the House of Commons the day before, an order-in-council was cabled to London announcing that the treaty had been approved by Canada's Parliament, and asking the King to ratify the treaty.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁸ Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 491-492.

³⁷⁹ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 111.

³⁸⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, June 30, 1919, 1.

³⁸¹ Glazebrook, *Canada at the Paris Peace Conference*, 113.

³⁸² *Ibid*, 115.

³⁸³ *Ibid*, 116.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 117.

The period from the beginning of the Peace Conference to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles was marked by increasing pessimism in the Canadian press. While the newspapers still pressed strongly for a League of Nations, for strong Canadian representation, for an end to war, for Germany to pay adequate reparations and for an end to the old ways of conducting diplomacy, new more complex issues arose. After the excitement from the end of the war, realism began to set in. Major problems began to appear. The major delegations at the Conference had disagreements, the Italians even walked out for a period. While Wilson still stood strong, US support back home was weakening. Secret treaties from before the war made agreement difficult. Old diplomacy persisted.

There was trouble at home in Canada as well. Thousands of soldiers were returning home looking for work and many war industries were winding down. The results were events like the Winnipeg General Strike in May of 1919. The country was still recovering from the Spanish Flu. The conference went on too long for some of Canada's representatives. Eventually, Borden had to return to Canada to deal with domestic issues. On the day the treaty was signed, *The Globe* reported on declining trade and the Government of Canada's negotiations for a new loan.³⁸⁵ Arguably, by the time the Peace Conference had ended, as a result of the growing political and economic unrest, Canadians were not as interested anymore. Later historians saw the Peace Conference as a noteworthy event, but for most Canadians in June 1919, there were more pressing matters. Therefore, there was little debate in the newspapers as to what benefits Canada had gained through its representation at the Peace Conference.

³⁸⁵ *The Globe*, June 30, 1919, 2.

Despite the depression and pessimism, the main themes stayed much the same. Canadian newspapers still had big ideas and were still weak on the explanations of how they would be accomplished. Ending war was still of vital importance. The press still wanted to see international diplomacy conducted in a new way, and was quite upset when it did not happen. While representation at the Peace Conference had been achieved, now representation in the League of Nations was demanded. There were contradictions though at times in the newspapers. The Canadian press called for a League of Nations that would restrict Canada's sovereignty, yet at the same time wanted to increase the country's sovereignty within the Empire. The newspapers never reconciled these issues.

Conclusion

Following the First World War, English-language Canadian newspapers did see Canada entering a new era as a result of the Paris Peace Conference. Canada was portrayed as undergoing a religious rebirth and should hold its head high for its strong efforts during the war. However, for Canadian newspapers there were some important objectives to accomplish. First and most important, a lasting peace had to be achieved. Canadians were tired of war. The whole world was tired of it. The Canadian press wanted something done to ensure that the peace would be lasting, and some kind of mechanism would be put into place to ensure that war never happened again. Secondly, and in conjunction with the first goal, a new way of conducting international diplomacy needed to be started. Secret treaties and the balance of power were no longer adequate, and had shown their inadequacy by failing to prevent the war. The point on open covenants of peace from Wilson's Fourteen Points was very relevant to the Canadian press. People needed to know what their diplomats and politicians were up to. The newspapers drew upon the tone of the Fourteen Points as a way to conduct international diplomacy that would prevent the plots and treaties that had led to the war from happening again.

While Canadian newspapers embraced the optimism of the immediate post-war period, they also reflected the many dilemmas and contradictions of how such lofty principles could be put into practice. They failed to provide specific details with how they could be accomplished. The newspapers often failed to understand the complexity and contradictions of some of the issues. The press supported the British Empire, but also wished for a new and undetermined form of Canadian representation that would reflect the

country's wartime role and independence. Canada did gain a place at the conference table, but soon realized that Canada's representation could be altered by the whims of the larger powers, including Great Britain. Even as Canada signed the treaty in June, its status remained unclear. The Canadian press wanted to punish the Kaiser and Germany, but was uncertain about how best to gain reparations. Canadians wanted a League of Nations that would bring an end to war, but could not come to terms with how the League could impinge on its sovereignty. Canadians wanted to abide by the lofty rhetoric of Wilson's Fourteen Points, but only when it worked to their advantage.

How exactly would Canada be able to take control of Greenland? Where would an international police force come from? How could increased sovereignty be advocated for Canada within the empire, even as an international league would restrict countries rights, yet also oppose any kind of racial equality clause for fear it would restrict Canada's right to control its immigration? The quote from Glazebrook used in the first chapter is relevant here as well. Glazebrook wrote that:

Official Canada had gained experience in the arts of war and diplomacy, and the public was to exhibit a marked degree of interest in world affairs – an interest that had existed only in a small degree before the war. Here, if properly encouraged and channelled, was one of the most important assets that a country with world interests could have. An informed and critical public opinion would in turn stimulate parliament to a close study of the government's foreign policy, and ensure that a degree and direction of Canada's activity in the foreign field was in accordance with the considered desires of the peoples.³⁸⁶

Glazebrook wrote about how official Canada and the Canadian public would learn a great deal from the Peace Conference. Canadians would develop a new interest in world affairs that would spark Parliament into examining the direction of Canada's foreign policy.

Glazebrook does not mention it, but this idea should apply to the press as well. The Peace

³⁸⁶ Glazebrook, *A History of Canadian External Relations*, 22-23.

Conference exposed the Canadian press' woeful understanding of foreign affairs. The Peace Conference provided an excellent introduction for Canadian newspapers into the world of international diplomacy. New issues which had probably never been considered by the press before were now being examined. While the press often held high-minded ideas as to how the Conference would work, and what it would accomplish, the failure of the Conference to provide for any kind of lasting peace was an excellent lesson. In order for the Canadian public to become informed and critical about world affairs, the Canadian press was also going to have to develop these attributes.

The understanding of the Peace Conference by Canadians was far more complex than most historians have presented. Throughout the long conference Canadian newspapers dealt with many issues and underwent many changes in mood. From optimism to realism and back, Canadian newspapers gave the Peace Conference a large amount of coverage. Not all the coverage dealt with Canada's role, but when it was dealt with it did not focus entirely on the Peace Conference being a turning point in Canadian history. Yes, it was a very important Conference for Canada, but it was far more important that a long lasting and just peace be achieved.

If Canadians saw the event through the eyes of the Canadian press, they would no doubt have been impressed. Canadian representatives were taking part in one of the largest peace Conferences ever. Initially they may have felt the optimism of the newspapers once the war was over. They may have read with interest about the League of Nations that was planned. They may have debated the dilemmas that the Treaty of Paris reflected. Finally, they may have lost interest by the time the Conference was completed. Borden and Foster had come home, and domestic problems were on the top of the agenda.

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