1

PM-1 3½" x 4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file / Votre référence

Our file / Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

**THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA AT
ARM'S LENGTH FROM
THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA:
A PRECARIOUS BALANCING ACT**

by Martha J. King, Hon. B.A.

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Canadian Studies**

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

January 8, 1996

copyright Martha J. King, 1996

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe thanks to many people who helped me with this thesis. At Carleton University, both Barbara Stevenson and Natalie Luckyj provided useful comments and direction. My supervisor Peter Harcourt shaped this work with wisdom, patience, compassion and irreverent humour. I am grateful for our after-hours chats at the dining room table.

At the National Gallery, my research was advanced considerably with the knowledgeable assistance of Cindy Campbell in the Archives and Maija Vilcins in the Library. Other colleagues shared their ideas and insights which helped form this work. Catherine Jensen's encouragement and support helped me along at critical junctures.

My family has stood behind me through this lengthy project. Even when the thesis was a forbidden subject of discussion, I knew I had their unconditional support. Good friends have nudged me along with rosy descriptions of post-thesis life. No one has lived through the ups and downs of my academic life more closely than Nigel, and more recently, Eleanor. They've "hung in there" with an undue amount of love and patience -- I share my success with them both.

Name

MARTHA KING

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

0385

U.M.I.

SUBJECT TERM

SUBJECT CODE

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Architecture 0229
Art History 0377
Cinema 0906
Dance 0378
Fine Arts 0357
Information Science 0223
Journals 0391
Library Science 0399
Mass Communications 0708
Music 0413
Speech Communications 0459
Theater 0465

EDUCATION

General 0515
Administration 0514
Adult and Continuing 0516
Agricultural 0517
Art 0274
Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
Business 0286
Community College 0275
Curriculum and Instruction 0227
Early Childhood 0518
Elementary 0524
Finance 0277
Guidance and Counseling 0519
Health 0680
Higher 0745
History of 0520
Home Economics 0278
Industrial 0521
Language and Literature 0279
Mathematics 0280
Music 0522
Philosophy of 0998
Physical 0523

Psychology 0525
Reading 0535
Religious 0527
Services 0114
Secondary 0533
Social Sciences 0534
Sociology of 0340
Special 0529
Teacher Training 0530
Technology 0710
Tests and Measurements 0288
Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

Language 0679
General 0289
Ancient 0290
Linguistics 0291
Modern 0291
Literature 0401
General 0294
Classical 0295
Comparative 0297
Medieval 0298
Modern 0316
African 0591
American 0305
Asian 0352
Canadian (English) 0355
Canadian (French) 0593
English 0311
Germanic 0312
Latin American 0315
Middle Eastern 0312
Romance 0314
Slavic and East European 0314

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Philosophy 0422
Religion 0319
General 0321
Biblical Studies 0319
Clergy 0320
History of 0322
Philosophy of 0469
Theology 0323

SOCIAL SCIENCES

American Studies 0323
Anthropology 0324
Archaeology 0326
Cultural 0327
Physical 0310
Business Administration 0272
General 0770
Accounting 0454
Banking 0338
Management 0385
Marketing 0501
Canadian Studies 0503
Economics 0505
General 0508
Agricultural 0509
Commerce/Business 0510
Finance 0511
History 0358
Labor 0366
Theory 0351
Folklore 0578
Geography 0578
Gerontology 0578
History 0578
General 0578

Ancient 0579
Medieval 0581
Modern 0582
Black 0328
African 0331
Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332
Canadian 0334
European 0335
Latin American 0336
Middle Eastern 0333
United States 0337
History of Science 0585
Law 0398
Political Science 0615
General 0616
International Law and Relations 0617
Public Administration 0814
Recreation 0452
Social Work 0626
Sociology 0627
General 0936
Criminology and Penology 0631
Demography 0628
Ethnic and Racial Studies 0629
Individual and Family Studies 0630
Industrial and Labor Relations 0700
Public and Social Welfare 0344
Social Structure and Development 0709
Theory and Methods 0999
Transportation 0453
Urban and Regional Planning 0453
Women's Studies 0453

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Agriculture 0473
General 0285
Agronomy 0475
Animal Culture and Nutrition 0476
Animal Pathology 0359
Food Science and Technology 0478
Forestry and Wildlife 0479
Plant Culture 0480
Plant Pathology 0817
Plant Physiology 0777
Range Management 0746
Wood Technology 0306
Biology 0287
General 0308
Anatomy 0309
Biostatistics 0320
Botany 0320
Cell 0353
Ecology 0369
Entomology 0793
Genetics 0410
Immunology 0307
Microbiology 0317
Molecular 0416
Neuroscience 0453
Oceanography 0821
Physiology 0778
Radiation 0772
Veterinary Science 0772
Zoology 0772
Biophysics 0776
General 0776
Medical 0776

EARTH SCIENCES

Biogeochemistry 0425
Cosmochemistry 0996

Geodesy 0370
Geology 0372
Geophysics 0373
Hydrology 0388
Mineralogy 0411
Paleobotany 0345
Paleoecology 0426
Paleontology 0418
Paleozoology 0985
Palynology 0427
Physical Geography 0368
Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Environmental Sciences 0768
Health Sciences 0566
General 0300
Audiology 0992
Chemotherapy 0567
Dentistry 0350
Education 0769
Hospital Management 0758
Human Development 0982
Immunology 0564
Medicine and Surgery 0347
Mental Health 0569
Nursing 0570
Nutrition 0380
Obstetrics and Gynecology 0354
Occupational Health and Therapy 0381
Ophthalmology 0571
Pathology 0419
Pharmacology 0572
Pharmacy 0382
Physical Therapy 0573
Public Health 0574
Radiology 0574
Recreation 0575

Speech Pathology 0460
Toxicology 0383
Home Economics 0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences

Chemistry 0485
General 0749
Agricultural 0486
Analytical 0487
Biochemistry 0488
Inorganic 0738
Nuclear 0490
Organic 0491
Pharmaceutical 0494
Physical 0495
Polymer 0754
Radiation 0405
Mathematics 0605
Physics 0986
General 0606
Acoustics 0608
Astronomy and Astrophysics 0748
Atmospheric Science 0607
Atomic 0798
Electronics and Electricity 0759
Elementary Particles and High Energy 0609
Fluid and Plasma 0510
Molecular 0752
Nuclear 0756
Optics 0611
Radiation 0463
Solid State 0463
Statistics 0346
Applied Sciences 0984
Applied Mechanics 0984
Computer Science 0984

Engineering 0537
General 0538
Aerospace 0539
Agricultural 0540
Automotive 0541
Biomedical 0542
Chemical 0543
Civil 0544
Electronics and Electrical 0348
Heat and Thermodynamics 0545
Hydraulic 0546
Industrial 0547
Marine 0794
Materials Science 0548
Mechanical 0743
Metallurgy 0551
Mining 0552
Nuclear 0549
Packaging 0765
Petroleum 0554
Sanitary and Municipal System Science 0790
Geotechnology 0428
Operations Research 0796
Plastics Technology 0795
Textile Technology 0994

PSYCHOLOGY

General 0621
Behavioral 0384
Clinical 0622
Developmental 0620
Experimental 0623
Industrial 0624
Personality 0625
Physiological 0989
Psychobiology 0349
Psychometrics 0632
Social 0451

**"The National Gallery of Canada at Arm's Length
from The Government of Canada:
A Precarious Balancing Act"**

J.Peter Harrison
Thesis Supervisor

.....
Director
School of Canadian Studies

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
January 1996

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the history of the relationship between the Canadian government and the National Gallery of Canada, focusing on two controversies over purchases of works of art from the 1950s and 1990s. Throughout its history, the National Gallery has been at varying degrees of arm's length from the government in artistic matters, including acquisitions. Experience has shown that arm's length is not a constant, immutable or inviolable phenomenon. Because it is so broadly defined, arm's length is subject to continual scrutiny, challenge and reinterpretation. Wherever works of art and public resources come together in a democracy, there will be debate over issues of accountability and artistic freedom. This dialogue can be meaningful and enriching, or mean-spirited and self-serving. The National Gallery's experience demonstrates that, although arm's length remains an imperfect compromise, it provides a solution to arts funding which is both typically Canadian and completely appropriate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe thanks to many people who helped me with this thesis. At Carleton University, both Barbara Stevenson and Natalie Luckyj provided useful comments and direction. My supervisor Peter Harcourt shaped this work with wisdom, patience, compassion and irreverent humour. I am grateful for our after-hours chats at the dining room table.

At the National Gallery, my research was advanced considerably with the knowledgeable assistance of Cindy Campbell in the Archives and Maija Vilcins in the Library. Other colleagues shared their ideas and insights which helped form this work. Catherine Jensen's encouragement and support helped me along at critical junctures.

My family has stood behind me through this lengthy project. Even when the thesis was a forbidden subject of discussion, I knew I had their unconditional support. Good friends have nudged me along with rosy descriptions of post-thesis life. No one has lived through the ups and downs of my academic life more closely than Nigel, and more recently, Eleanor. They've "hung in there" with an undue amount of love and patience -- I share my success with them both.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	page1
Chapter 1 The Early Years: Patronage, Patriotism and Propaganda	page 4
Chapter 2 The 1950s: Masterpieces, Muddles and a Martyr	page 33
Chapter 3 The Gallery Grows Up: Stripes, Strife and Strategies for Survival	page 71
Conclusion	page 103
Appendix I Appropriations and Purchases	page 106
Appendix II Chronology	page 109
Bibliography	page 111

INTRODUCTION

Arm's length is an awkward metaphor which refers to the relationship between many agencies and organizations and the government which funds their activities. Most often in Canada it is used with reference to federal cultural agencies. The fact that the best French translations are either *l'autonomie* or *l'indépendance* indicates how imprecise this term is, yet, within the cultural sector, its meaning is now widely understood.

In the federal context, arm's length typically describes legislation which stipulates that an agency will report and be accountable to Parliament and thus, to the Canadian people, through a Minister of the Crown. The finance and administration of that agency are guided by Canadian law and government regulation. Decisions on artistic matters however, rest with the collective expertise of staff, boards and committees of that agency; lacking such expertise, elected officials are not permitted to interfere. This is, of course, an entirely theoretical definition.

In practice, arm's length is applied with tremendous variation -- it is a slippery concept, subject to many different interpretations. Following the metaphor, it is an appendage which can be long or short, strong or weak, easily twisted, broken and amputated. Organizations at arm's length from government are in a vulnerable position and must continuously work to foster a healthy

relationship with their political masters, who may come and go with every election. Wherever public funds are spent on the arts, there will be dissent and debate among elected officials as well as taxpayers. Their opinions may be wise or ill-informed, self-righteous or selfless, highly specific and vastly varying. Arm's length serves as a filter for this potentially destructive interference.

Complex variations of arm's length have been in effect at the National Gallery of Canada for most of this century. This paper looks at how the changing nature of arm's length has affected the relationship between the Canadian government and the National Gallery. The highly visible, public nature of the Gallery, combined with its long and vibrant history make for a particularly compelling study. The many factors which have coloured this relationship, including World Wars, party politics, shifting mandates and individual personalities will be examined. Arm's length at the National Gallery has grown from an a largely informal agreement based on political patronage to a well-established trust.

Exhibitions and acquisitions are the most important and most public business of the National Gallery. While exhibitions come and go, acquisitions however, endure from one generation to the next; the collection is the nexus of the organization. Two controversies over the purchase of works of art bring arm's

length at the National Gallery into focus. In the 1950s, purchases from the famous Liechtenstein collection drew the wrath of Diefenbaker's government; thirty-five years later, the Gallery's purchase of Barnett Newman's Voice of Fire proved to be equally provocative, but with a happier outcome.

While these two events are not exactly parallel, they do indicate both how the Gallery has matured and the concept of arm's length has taken root in Canada. Controversies at the National Gallery are not unusual, but these two stories are unique in the degree to which they captured the public's imagination. Originating with much source material but very little existing research, this paper provides a departure point for future work, as more information becomes available.

In the 1950s, faced with a relative lack of private funding, the Canadian government formalized its wish to fund the arts in Canada. Arm's length mechanisms were wisely chosen. Alternatives to arm's length funding of the arts have been witnessed in this century and serve as bleak reminder of the worst aspects of human nature. Arm's length is the best system to balance the important concerns for accountability, public opinion and artistic and intellectual freedom. The National Gallery's history demonstrates how the essence of this debate has not changed in over a century.

CHAPTER 1

The Early Years: Patronage, Patriotism and Propaganda

To understand the present relationship of the National Gallery with the government of Canada, one must review its history. Since its inception in 1880, the National Gallery has had, for better and worse, close ties to the federal government. As its main source of revenue, the Gallery receives an annual appropriation from the government. Physical proximity has always been a symbol of this connection: located in various buildings in Ottawa, the Gallery has never been more than a kilometre or two from Parliament Hill. The Gallery has essentially grown up with Canada; as an instrument of culture it has, over the years, reflected many of the preoccupations, passions and concerns of the country at large.

The artists who lobbied for the creation of a National Gallery recognized that, then as now, support from government at the highest level was essential. As the Queen's representative with ties to Britain, the Governor General was the most senior and influential force for culture in Canada. Each Governor General (or his spouse), naturally, had personal preferences and favoured causes, such as Lord Stanley's passion for hockey and Lady Grey's enthusiasm for football. In the 1870s, Toronto artist Lucius O'Brien successfully worked

to convince Governor General Lord Dufferin of the importance of the visual arts in the new dominion; in 1877, Dufferin publicly called for the Canadian government to establish a national gallery.¹

Governor General from 1878 to 1883, the Marquis of Lorne and his wife, Princess Louise both enjoyed watercolour painting, not an unusual hobby for cultivated Britons at home or in the colonies. O'Brien also established close ties to the Lornes, and was rewarded with important commissions and a prestigious honour. In 1880, O'Brien was appointed the founding president of the Royal Canadian Academy (RCA).

On March 6, 1880 Lorne launched the RCA together with the National Gallery at a glamorous social event which attracted over 600 of Ottawa's finest citizens.² The exhibition of paintings and sculpture by RCA artists was held at the Clarendon Hotel, at the corner of Sussex and George streets. The National Gallery was to serve as a modest repository for the more influential Academy's members' diploma pieces. Upon admission into the Academy,

¹ R. H. Hubbard, "The Early Years of the National Gallery of Canada", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada (Volume III, Series IV, Section II, June 1965): 121.

² The evening's glamour was tarnished slightly by the crush in the coat room, in which gentlemen's coats, hats and overshoes got badly mixed up, and several beaver and felt hats were damaged beyond repair. Hubbard in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 122.

members were required to donate their "masterpiece", the painting or sculpture which won them the Academy honour. The RCA was, of course, modelled after the Royal Academy, a British institution of long and noble heritage.

Placed under the authority of the Minister of Public Works by the Privy Council in 1880, the Gallery suffered from benign neglect for the next 27 years.³ A budget for the National Gallery to purchase works of art would not exist for some years to come, although the government was persuaded to purchase a few works from exhibitions in 1886 and 1894.⁴ Responsibility for the Gallery was delegated to J.W.H. Watts (1850-1917), head of the drafting department of the office of the Dominion Chief Architect, friend of many RCA members, and a talented printmaker in his own right.⁵ Aside from his personal interest in the visual arts, housing and occasionally displaying the collection was Watts' chief concern as far as the Gallery was concerned. In 1882, "permanent" exhibition space was found in the form of two rooms, converted from a builders' workshop adjacent to the Supreme Court of

³ Jean Sutherland Boggs, The National Gallery of Canada, (Toronto: 1971), 2.

⁴ Boggs, 4.

⁵ Watts would be succeeded by other DPW Curators, including L. Fennings Taylor and Walter R. Billings before a museum professional was hired in 1910, but they did not make a significant contribution to the work of the National Gallery. Boggs, 5.

Canada.

In 1888, the Gallery was moved to the Department of Fisheries building at Queen and O'Connor Streets, into rooms above the fisheries exhibit. Proximity to this popular attraction actually boosted attendance figures for Gallery exhibitions!⁶ In addition to the occasional acquisition by gift, the RCA made a few purchases from exhibitions for the National Gallery.⁷ The RCA's annual exhibition was held there only every three years, the intervening two in Toronto. A period account describes a peculiar kind of aesthetic experience:

The most prominent object in the Gallery seems not, however, to have been a work of art, but the big stove that stood in the centre of the room. When William R. Watson, then art critic of the Montreal Gazette, first visited the Gallery about 1907, it was towards noon, and as he went upstairs he was greeted by a strong smell of cooking. It was the woman caretaker's lunch being cooked on that very stove.⁸

Beyond the occasional commission of a commemorative painting or statue, the Canadian government took little interest in the visual arts in the nineteenth century. Following O'Brien, Otto Jacobi and Robert Harris served as presidents of the RCA.⁹ For over two decades, "very little ever happened"

⁶ Boggs, 2-3.

⁷ Boggs, 3.

⁸ Hubbard in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 124.

⁹ Boggs, 3.

at the National Gallery.¹⁰ It was considered, perhaps accurately, as a diversion for a very small and elite group of people.

By 1907, the Royal Canadian Academy's lobbying efforts were rewarded again when the National Gallery was granted a new "permanent" home, a governing body and an acquisitions budget. This coup was achieved when RCA president George Reid convinced Governor General Lord Grey to act on behalf of the RCA membership. Lord Grey advanced a petition to Prime Minister Laurier through the Minister of Agriculture and Acting Minister of Public Works, Sydney Fisher.¹¹

The National Gallery's new home in the Victoria Memorial Building was shared with the Geological Society of Canada. Politicians took an understandable interest in the Gallery's expanded mandate: enduring representations of their accomplishments and those of their predecessors were politically useful applications of the fine arts. Granting a higher profile to the National Gallery also symbolized the government's wish to shift modestly away from colonial status. Centuries of European experience, from Constantine through Charlemagne to Napoleon, demonstrated that state-

¹⁰ Maud Brown, Breaking Barriers: Eric Brown and the National Gallery of Canada, (Ottawa, 1964), p. 22

¹¹ Boggs, 5.

supported culture contributed to the greater glory of the nation.

To administer the Gallery, an Advisory Arts Council was created by an Order in Council, that is by the Privy Council, and approved by the Governor General. This document of April 3, 1907 was quite explicit that expenditures for purchase of works of art for the Government were to be entrusted to the Minister of Public Works.¹² The Advisory Council members, would provide "advice and assistance" upon request from the Minister in the selection of works of art for the National Gallery as well as, for the first time, public monuments and other commemorative works of art.¹³ They were given an annual grant of \$10,000.¹⁴

George Reid had lobbied for a governing body comprised of Academy membership, that is, artists. Snubbing the RCA artists whom he felt were too influential, Lord Grey appointed a high-profile Council of three non-artist members Sir George Drummond (1829-1909), a Montreal businessman and collector, served as chairman until his death. He was succeeded by Byron (later Sir Edmund) Walker (1848-1924), the Toronto-based collector and president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Dr. Francis Shepherd and

¹² Boggs, 8.

¹³ National Gallery of Canada, Annual Report, 1920/1, 22-23.

¹⁴ Boggs, 8.

Senator Arthur Boyer were the other two members. Together, the National Gallery's Advisory Council, in the absence of any permanent curatorial staff, established a model of a National Gallery with close ties to government.

In his diary, Walker describes the Council's delicate position between Minister Fisher and the public:

We are to stand in the gap of public criticism and to try and bring good results for art out of what has not thus far been a very hopeful condition.¹⁵

Fisher could now deflect criticism from the RCA to the Council while devoting what little attention he had for the Gallery to purchasing. Indeed, the minister responsible for the new profile of the Gallery took an active interest in its collecting activities:

Fisher's interest in the council's work at times proved a little overwhelming. In a six-page letter he gave Walker the benefit of his views on some pictures the chairman had recently chosen. Though he ended with apologies for expressing his own crude opinions, the situation was a delicate one. The substance of Walker's reply was that the government were not obliged to accept his solutions; but he sincerely hoped they would, as otherwise the situation would be very embarrassing for him.¹⁶

On another occasion, Walker wrote to Minister Fisher to remind him of the Advisory Council's obligation to purchase art not based on personal preferences but to support Canada's leading and emerging artists. Again

¹⁵ G.P. de T. Glazebrook, Sir Edmund Walker, (Toronto: 1933), 90.

¹⁶ Brown, Breaking Barriers, 23.

unable to restrain himself, Fisher proposed that Senator Boyer be authorized to spend \$1000 (or a little more) on Italian pictures simply because he frequently visited Italy.¹⁷

This is an early case of a politician meddling in the artistic matters of the Gallery -- no doubt with the best of intentions. Had Fisher had his way, the collection, we can now see, would have suffered tremendously. It was up to the Council's chairman to use all of his diplomatic skills to redirect the minister's considerable influence. However, ministerial intervention was welcomed, in fact sought a few years later to secure an important purchase. Without the required Council unanimity on the purchase of Horatio Walker's Oxen Drinking, (Boyer thought \$10,000 too steep), Sir Edmund exerted pressure on Fisher. The Minister was convinced, the democracy of the Council overruled, and substantial funds allocated for the purchase of the Walker.¹⁸ Sir Edmund was a formidable force, and through him the Council exerted considerable control over Gallery expenditures by the Ministry.

When Shepherd and Boyer were unavailable to meet in the spring of 1909, Walker alone made recommendations to the Minister on purchases. His diary

¹⁷ Brown, Breaking Barriers, 23.

¹⁸ In 1970, another Walker painting was purchased by the Gallery for one-third of the price paid in 1910. Boggs, 8.

again reveals the uncomfortable pressure exerted on him by artists wishing to have their work purchased for the National Gallery.¹⁹ The Gallery's budget was also vulnerable from misuse within government: at one point, a senator deducted \$800 from the appropriation to purchase pictures for his chamber.²⁰

Proximity to government saw the fortunes of the National Gallery improve through the 1910s and 1920s. Finally government took a greater interest and made a bigger commitment to it. A powerful and well-connected Board was, in a large part, behind this. Gallery curator and historian R. H. Hubbard frankly acknowledged that "the Gallery got preferential treatment over and above its importance in the eyes of the public."²¹

In 1910, Walker led 17 other prominent Toronto Liberals to break with the party and Laurier's government over the proposed reciprocity agreement with the United States. This event contributed to Laurier's defeat by Borden's Conservative party the following year. The resulting patronage has been described delicately:

When the Conservative leaders took office they were naturally attentive to the requests of the man whose support of their

¹⁹ Glazebrook, Sir Edmund Walker, 92.

²⁰ Glazebrook, Sir Edmund Walker, 101.

²¹ Hubbard in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 126.

policies had contributed so much to their success.²²

Walker wrote to a fellow Council member, "I feel we shall get things done now."²³ Suddenly, both the budget and authority of the Gallery were increased, while Public Works officials became more attentive and compliant. At the same time, it was recognized that the value and profile of the Gallery's collection had grown to the point where part-time administration was insufficient. In 1910 a young Englishman, Eric Brown, was appointed as the first full-time curator, then promoted to director in 1912.²⁴

Brown came to the modest post with a mixed bag of qualifications: a brother Arnesby who was a member of the British Royal Academy, a failed career in farming, and an education in the classics and literature. In 1909, Brown met Sir Edmund Walker in Montreal while taking care of an exhibition of British pictures and worked for a brief time at the Art Gallery of Toronto. Walker liked Brown and hired him.²⁵

The following year brought further government recognition in the form of legislation, the National Gallery of Canada Act. Contemporary accounts

²² Brown, Breaking Barriers, 30.

²³ Boggs, 8.

²⁴ Boggs, 9.

²⁵ Brown, Breaking Barriers, 12-17.

describe Brown with his feet up on the sofa at home, drafting the legislation; clearly government was happy to leave the details of the Gallery's administration in his hands at this time.²⁶ Sir Edmund worked with Brown to ensure that the new legislation would effectively exclude the RCA from influence over the Gallery.²⁷

The 1913 legislation incorporated the Gallery, replaced the Advisory Council with a Board of Trustees and endowed this body with the considerable powers of a government commission. The mandate articulated in the National Gallery of Canada Act included, in order of importance as follows: development, maintenance, care and management of the National Gallery, encouraging and cultivating "correct artistic taste" and interest in art, promotion and exhibition of art, care of RCA deposit pieces and, finally, purchase of works of art.²⁸ No specific mention is made of Canadian art. The Board of Trustees was given the authority to purchase works of art, rather than simply advise the Minister on purchases. It is significant that, although a budget for purchases was now in the hands of the Gallery, this function was given the lowest priority in the legislation.

²⁶ Brown, Breaking Barriers, 31.

²⁷ Boggs, 11.

²⁸ Canada. An Act to incorporate the National Gallery of Canada, (Ottawa, 1913).

In spite of a legislated mandate, the National Gallery was subject to continual attack. RCA members in particular were determined to recoup the Academy's previous status as the leading visual arts organization in Canada. Without representation on the Board, they regularly opposed the Gallery with vocal and well-organized efforts to oust Brown.²⁹

By 1914, the acquisitions budget was relinquished as a wartime sacrifice. Another blow struck when the Gallery was dislocated to accommodate parliament after Centre Block burned down in 1916. Over a weekend, the collection was relegated to the basement so the House could sit on the following Monday. Faced with both a visibility and storage problem, Brown reacted with an instinct for survival - by initiating a programme of travelling exhibitions. The Trustees sought another means of keeping the Gallery meaningful and useful in the eyes of the public and official purse-holders. Walker and Brown quickly involved the Gallery in the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF), an ambitious war art project spearheaded by another major Canadian power-broker, Max Aitken.

Appointed Lord Beaverbrook in 1917, the London-based Aitken had seen how first Germany and Australia in 1915, and then Britain in 1916, had sent artists to the front. The resulting works of art were considered both documentation

²⁹ Boggs, 14.

and propaganda, the latter term not earning a negative connotation until the Second World War. Friend of Sir Edmund Walker, Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of the Militia, and Prime Minister Robert Borden, Aitken was well-placed to convince these leaders how visual documentation could "maintain patriotism and enthusiasm and eager interest in our Army in France" or at least boost sagging enlistment.³⁰ The Canadian War Memorials Fund was established in 1916 as a branch of the Canadian War Records Office, funded substantially by Beaverbrook's personal fortune.

Walker gave crucial direction to Beaverbrook's project, including encouraging him to employ Canadian artists. The Gallery was responsible for selecting, assigning and supervising approximately 43 Canadian and 77 British war artists.³¹ War artists depicted both the home front and battlefield in over 800 works of art, summarized as

the most complete artistic record of any country's share in the great war, and the most significant manifestation of artistic activity during this period.³²

An exhibition of the works of art produced opened to a packed crowd at

³⁰ Maria Tippet, Art in the Service of War: Canada, Art and the Great War, (Toronto, 1984), 19.

³¹ Tippet, Art at the Service of War, 51.

³² The Canadian War Memorials Exhibition Catalogue, (Toronto, 1919), 6.

Burlington House in London in 1918 with Borden in attendance. He later confessed to his wife his difficulty in understanding and appreciating some of the more modern works, but was convinced by the favourable critical reaction.³³ The exhibition toured to New York, Toronto and Montreal through 1919, drawing large crowds and bringing unprecedented attention to Canada and Canadian talent. The Gallery offered a permanent home for the paintings, in the hope that a badly-needed new building could be constructed. Both Walker and Brown, while doubting the merits of a war art commission, recognized that the future of the National Gallery would be secure if the prestigious CWMF collection were acquired.³⁴ Once again, the Gallery was able to promote the objectives of the Canadian government while looking after its own interests. The Gallery reopened in the Victoria Memorial Museum in September 1921 with the CWMF as part of its collection.

In December 1921, the Gallery's political fortune shifted again with the election of Mackenzie King as Prime Minister. King was not inclined to support Walker, whose abandonment of Sir Wilfrid Laurier over the issue of Reciprocity had led to the defeat of his Liberal government in 1911. King soon advised the Gallery's Board of Trustees that they should purchase a painting from his friend Carl Ahrens, which they declined to do. Within a

³³ Tippet, Art in the Service of War, 80.

³⁴ Tippet, Art in the Service of War, 37-9.

month, three Liberal supporters were appointed to the Board; the purchase of an Ahrens painting followed for the large sum of \$1500 followed in April 1922.³⁵ Among the new members was Newton McTavish, a champion of the older Canadian Art Club and a friend of King's. McTavish successfully pushed through two other high value purchases on the specific encouragement of the Prime Minister.³⁶

The war experience had been formative for both Brown and the artists who would form the Group of Seven. Remembered as a champion of the Group of Seven, Brown's motivation was based both in nationalist sentiment and calculated pragmatism -- he had witnessed how the Tate Gallery achieved prominence on a modest budget by purchasing and promoting young English artists.³⁷ Canada was ripe for such a celebration of home grown talent, having proved itself in the international arena of World War I at the pivotal battles of Ypres and Vimy Ridge. The National Gallery was in a perfect position both to promote and to benefit from this coming of age.

In the 1910s Tom Thomson and the artists who would form the Group of

³⁵ Charles C. Hill, The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation, (Ottawa, 1995), 137-8.

³⁶ Hill, The Group of Seven, 139.

³⁷ Maria Tippett, Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission, (Toronto, 1990), 83.

Seven were producing works of art which, although anti-modernist in subject matter, were heralded as home-grown Canadian modern art. Their bold paintings, while perhaps not purely an instinctive reaction to the Canadian landscape, did represent a significant departure from the dominant European, nineteenth-century salon style.³⁸ Their work shaped by international movements in fine art, commercial and design, the Group forged a distinct Canadian school, exhibiting together for the first time in 1920. At the risk of oversimplifying the important contribution of the Group of Seven, it can be said that they were in the right place at the right time:

...they arrived on the scene at that climactic moment when the rising tide of national spirit in a young land cried out for objectification in a new and vigorous way. The time was ripe and, as interpreters, The Group were apt. They had just the right blend of national idealism, crusade, lyricism, audacious enterprise, and intellectual and economic independence necessary to make the movement the success it was.³⁹

The Group's success was clinched with the legendary Wembley Exhibition in April 1924. Out-manoeuvring the RCA who wanted to organize Canada's contribution to this British Empire summit, Brown's protégés were fairly represented. The Wembley selection of 270 works by 108 artists was made

³⁸ International influences on the work of the Group of Seven are explored in two books, The Group of Seven (1970) by Peter Mellen and The Mystic North (1984) by Roald Nasgaard.

³⁹ Canada. Royal Commission Studies, A Selection of Essays Prepared for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, (Ottawa, 1951), 408.

by a jury of academicians, with Group members represented by only 20 work...⁴⁰ Yet it was the work of the Group of Seven which drew unanimous, enthusiastic praise from international reviewers of the Empire exhibition. Calls for Brown's resignation by some critics, the RCA and artists not included in the exhibition fell on the deaf ears of government and Gallery Trustees who could see only how Canada's image abroad had been enhanced.⁴¹ In June 1924, Prime Minister Mackenzie King, never a great fan of the arts, spoke in the House of Commons in support of the Wembley exhibition, and argued for an enhanced budget for the Gallery.⁴²

Again, Canada's international reputation abroad was enhanced by the National Gallery, and this benefit was not lost on the government of the day. The Gallery's annual appropriation the following year (1925/6) rose to \$75,000. The Gallery's renewed favour with government brought no assurance of independence in matters of artistic judgement, in spite of the 1913 legislation. Backbenchers continually took potshots at the Gallery: one Mr. Stevens argued for regional representation of artists in the collection, with

⁴⁰ Hill, The Group of Seven, 143.

⁴¹ J. Russell Harper's often-quoted mention of Brown being "abused and dragged verbally in the most humiliating fashion across the floor of the House of Commons for championing the new movement" (Painting in Canada: a history, 288) is not supported by a review of Hansards of this period.

⁴² Dominion of Canada, Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons, June 13 and June 23, 1924.

those artists charged with "portraying life and scenery in the Dominion."⁴³ This is but one example of the quality of debate on the National Gallery which took place, usually annually, before approval of the Main Estimates.

By representing the young Canadian nation to itself, the work of the Group was indirectly promoting national unity following the British model. Canadian leaders, particularly the Governor General, were convinced of the superiority of British culture, and the need to assert this fact in the face of increased levels of non-British immigration to Canada. Lord Bessborough, through the 1920s and as Governor General (1931-35), spoke publicly about the unsuitability of "alien elements", and their threat to national unity; rapid assimilation was the only solution.⁴⁴ Paintings by the Group of Seven, while suspect for their "modernism", provided the best possible representation of Canada.

With socialism as the only cause for the visual arts to champion in the 1930s, and in the grip of the Depression, the National Gallery languished from government neglect. In 1932, the indefatigable RCA, harbouring a long grudge against the Gallery as a proponent of modernism, organized a national petition to send to the new Prime Minister R.B. Bennett. A total of 118

⁴³ Canada, Debates of the House of Commons, June 15, 1925.

⁴⁴ Tippet, Making Culture, 65.

artists signed the request to have the government to investigate "flagrant partisanship" on behalf of the Gallery, and for its organization of exhibitions "at home and abroad that do not represent the best in Canadian art." In response, 282 artists signed a document in support of the Gallery.⁴⁵ Many editorials, articles and letters to the editor followed over the next six months.

Having never been secure, the Gallery's annual budget plummeted from \$135,000 in 1928-9 to \$25,000 in 1934-5.⁴⁶ This drop in funding came despite the appointment of H.S. Southam, an influential, wealthy businessman, to the position of Chairman of the Board of Trustees in 1928/9. Now art for art's sake, the battle cry of modernism, was felt to be frivolous and decadent. To survive, art now had to prove its economic, or at least social, relevance. Canadian leaders could witness the massive public art campaign of the Works Project Administration in the United States, bringing art to the people while enhancing the image of the common working man.

The Gallery's own argument against art as a "frill" was not new. As early as 1920, Eric Brown declared that art was "inseparable from commerce, because commerce is largely dependent on design of every kind which art only can

⁴⁵ Hill, *The Group of Seven*, 280.

⁴⁶ National Gallery of Canada, Annual Report, (Ottawa, 1928-9, 1934/5).

supply."⁴⁷ This economics-based logic was articulated in the annual report as far back as 1920/1:

support of art in Canada is not only far from being the support of an aesthetic luxury but is quite definitely the support of an economic necessity of the greatest national importance. All commerce is in the last analysis largely dependent on successful design and design is dependent on art.⁴⁸

Here was a homeless, post-war, pre-Wembley National Gallery desperate to justify its existence, and to increase its measly annual appropriation of \$20,000.

Across Canada, fledgling art schools merged fine and applied art courses, the former regarded as the handmaiden to the latter. Many artists often retreated to teaching positions in these schools or to commercial design firms.

With the onset of the Second World War, artists, the Gallery and the Canadian government were united in purpose once again. Based on the model of the British War Artists' Committee launched in 1939 by Sir Kenneth Clark, the Canadian War Artists' Committee was formed in 1942.⁴⁹ Again, the National Gallery administered the war artists' project, enlisting the efforts of Lawren Harris, Alex Colville, and Carl Schaefer, among others. Director

⁴⁷ Tippet, Making Culture, 45.

⁴⁸ National Gallery of Canada, Annual Report, 1920/1, 15.

⁴⁹ Tippet, Making Culture, 111.

Harry O. McCurry led this initiative, having succeeded Brown after his death in 1939.

Throughout the war, Vincent Massey was posted in London as Canada's High Commissioner to Great Britain. While he and his family might easily have returned to Canada when London came under attack, Massey stayed on and witnessed first-hand the war effort on the home front. British artists were spontaneously creating works of literature, music and theatre to rally soldiers and civilians alike. Works of visual art were also being commissioned through the official channels of war art programmes. Massey fully endorsed the ideals expressed in Matthew Arnold's influential 1869 essay "Culture and Anarchy", which argued for the broad benefits of a strong, broadly-based system of culture and education.

In 1948, after his return to Canada, Massey wrote:

We were taught, during the war, that art is not merely the affair of the highbrow. Those years revealed an interest in fine things on the part of the community far deeper and wider than was realized earlier. This is particularly true of Great Britain where, because of war conditions, the public was denied so much in the world of pictures and music. Under-nourishment always induces an active appreciating of food. No one who witnessed the long queues waiting patiently to view the "picture of the month" in the National Gallery - the only great work brought to London any one time - or could see an audience listening to chamber music during an air-raid could fail to realize that such things have a necessary place in life and are not merely the pursuit of the dilettante. The war, indeed, not only revealed but stimulated an interest in the arts in England

which has remained far more widespread since its close than in the pre-war years.⁵⁰

At the same time, the western world was coming to grips with the horrible implications of thoroughly modern warfare where there were seemingly no rules of conduct between opposing sides. Propaganda took on a more sinister connotation as Nazi Germany exerted state control over the arts, curtailing freedom of expression. As early as 1937, the Nazis had organized the infamous propagandist exhibition of "Degenerate Art", featuring the works of modernist and Jewish artists confiscated from German museums. Works by Van Gogh, Chagall, Picasso, Kandinsky and Matisse were shown together with paintings by the insane, first in Munich, and then in other German cities.

All of this had a profound impact on Vincent Massey, who while an avowed Anglophile, was also a patriotic Canadian. With post-war hindsight, Massey condemned the "prostitution" of the arts in wartime Germany and in the totalitarian state of Soviet Russia; he cautioned artists in democratic states against being "too nationally self-conscious".⁵¹

Massey was not alone in his reaction to art during wartime; the formation of

⁵⁰ Vincent Massey, On Being Canadian, (Toronto, 1948), 33-4.

⁵¹ Massey, On Being Canadian, 36.

the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1945 officially recognized the importance of the outpouring of creativity to the general citizenry. While wanting to encourage nationalism by means of a vibrant cultural life, both Massey and the Council shunned the notion of "official control or political interference":

The very phrases are chilling. The arts can thrive only in the air of freedom. Official approval of this school of painting, or that group of writers, would sterilize taste and create a false orthodoxy.⁵²

Back in wartime Canada, similar ideas were fermenting among visual artists. In 1941, artists from across Canada gathered in Kingston at the invitation of artist André Biéler to discuss the issue of the artist and society. Galvanized by the war and inspired by both the WPA artists in the United States and Mexican muralists of the 1930s, artists at the Kingston Conference called for the complete integration of the artist into Canadian society. More radical participants argued that art belonged anywhere but in museums in order to be truly meaningful to people. Once again, the link between art and democracy was made, a notion that would gain wider currency in the following decade.

In 1944, a federation of sixteen Canadian arts bodies united to submit a brief to the Turgeon Committee (Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-

⁵² Massey, On Being Canadian, 48.

establishment) in what is now remembered as "the march on Ottawa".⁵³ This group became formalized the following years as the Canadian Council of the Arts. In its report, the Turgeon Committee recommended the establishment of a government body to promote the arts, laying the ground for the Massey Commission. In 1946 the Canadian Museums Association was founded, signalling that museums were becoming more visible, organized and powerful. It was a period of intense activity in the field of culture.

Social activism took a different form in Quebec, where artists had to contend with oppressive forces of the church and the provincial government of Maurice Duplessis. A group of sixteen French-Canadian artists responded with a manifesto, the Refus global, in 1948. The Refus global was a powerful call to action, encouraging the rejection of the suffocating dogma of the church and government in favour of individual spiritualism and creativity. These artists, led by Paul-Emile Borduas, placed their faith in the potential for art to influence all aspects of life -- the social, political, economic and spiritual. The Refus global effectively challenged to the status quo in Quebec and was an instrumental factor in the Quiet Revolution. Across Canada, art was proving itself as a powerful force for political and social change.

⁵³ Claude Bissell, The Imperial Canadian: Vincent Massey in Office, (Toronto, 1986), 199.

The culmination of wartime experience and peacetime prosperity and optimism had the Canadian intelligentsia musing about issues of culture and national identity. Having thrown off its colonial status with the Statute of Westminster only in 1931, Canada was still under the overwhelming influence of Britain. Now the United States, having emerged from the Second World War as a world leader in politics, economics and culture, loomed as a larger and closer threat to Canadian identity. American mass culture, from Hollywood to LIFE magazine to Abstract Expressionism, was ubiquitous and irresistible. In, Vincent Massey lamented the brain drain of educated young people to the greener professional pastures of the United States.⁵⁴

As early as April 1946, Brooke Claxton had recommended to Prime Minister King that Massey, upon his return to Canada, oversee various bodies concerned with the arts and communication in Canada.⁵⁵ King, no great fan of Massey, was not interested. By late 1948, Vincent Massey was home and looking for a position that would enable him to effect some of his strongly held views about Canadian culture. After some lobbying by members of his Cabinet, particularly Brooke Claxton, Prime Minister Louis St Laurent was convinced of the national (and political) importance of culture, and the need to have this issue publicly examined. Massey's name was again put forward

⁵⁴ Massey, On Being Canadian, 43.

⁵⁵ Bissell, The Imperial Canadian, 195-6.

as the favoured candidate.

St Laurent recognized how a country's vibrant cultural life could contribute domestic issues of national unity and education. Moreover, it was becoming readily apparent that, as a major player in world politics and trade, Canada now needed the trappings of culture to prove itself civilized. Key internationalists in St Laurent's government including Claxton and Lester Pearson sought to improve Canada's "logs and rocks reputation" abroad, recognizing the contribution that culture could make to diplomacy. Without a tradition of private philanthropy in Canada, public resources would be required.

In 1949, Massey accepted the appointment from St Laurent to head a Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences. The prologue to the statement of the Commission's specific responsibilities declared

that it is in the national interest to give encouragement to institutions which express national feeling, promote common understanding and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life, rural as well as urban.⁵⁶

For the first time, both policy-makers and artists endorsed Canadian culture

⁵⁶ Bissell, The Imperial Canadian, 196.

as a means of supporting sovereignty against the "Manifest Destiny" ambitions of the United States. Popular culture was equated with American culture, and high culture with British-influenced Canadian culture. The latter was judged to be much superior by the elites in government and academe. With value judgements and paternalism which do not bear up under scrutiny today, American culture was judged to be an undesirable presence from which Canadians should be shielded. In the 1950s this logic worked marvellously. Historian Paul Litt has argued how artists and the intelligentsia accepted the essentially flawed logic of high culture equals Canadian culture as the only way of securing public funding for their work.⁵⁷

The Commission's mandate, hearings and report reflected, we now know, were carefully constructed and managed to reflect the personal biases of Massey and his Commission colleagues.⁵⁸ Commissioner and archivist Hilda Neatby, for example, fought to have archives recognized in the report. Vincent Massey gave special attention to the visual arts and the National Gallery. Not surprisingly, Massey's ideal of the arts as funded but not directed by government (based on the model of the Arts Council of Great

⁵⁷ Paul Litt, "The Massey Commission, Americanization, and Canadian Cultural Nationalism", Queen's Quarterly, (Summer 1991), 375-87.

⁵⁸ Paul Litt, The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission, (Toronto, 1992), 56-80.

Britain) was enshrined in the Massey Report of 1951 and remains its most enduring recommendation.

The National Gallery was among hundreds of cultural organizations to make submissions to the Massey Commission. With Massey as chairman of both the Commission and the National Gallery, the Gallery was in a unique position to benefit from the Report. In addition to its plea for increased funding and a new building was a request for government to reconsider the Gallery's "anomalous" relationship with the Department of Public Works (DPW).⁵⁹

The Gallery argued:

there has been a tendency to regard the Gallery as a branch of the Department of Public Works, in a manner not intended by the Act. As this conception tends to hamper the Board's freedom of action, the National Gallery's independent position, the Trustees feel, should now be re-asserted and recognized.⁶⁰

The submission continues with the request to establish the Gallery as a separate department of the government, under its own Board of Trustees, like the Public Archives.

No doubt the DPW was an insensitive and incongruous political master for the National Gallery. The rather cavalier tone of the request and the use of

⁵⁹ National Gallery of Canada, Submission to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, (Ottawa, 1949), 6.

⁶⁰ NGC, Submission to Massey Commission, (Ottawa, 1949), 2.

terms like "freedom" and "independent" are noteworthy. No mention is made of the responsibilities and accountability which come with increased independence and resources. Here, perhaps, was an indication of the National Gallery's possible exploitation of its favour with the government. It could be argued that the Gallery's submission captured the sense of the time and the sentiments stirred by the Massey Commission -- of full confidence in a bright future and the important role culture would play.

Indeed, the Commission's report was very supportive of the National Gallery. First, the report identifies the "development and care of the national collections" as the first priority of the Gallery, a departure from the legislated mandate.⁶¹ The Gallery's request for special status is conveyed in the report, enhanced by a recommendation for the Board of Trustees to assume the advisory functions of the former Advisory Arts Council.⁶² Even the decades-old power struggle with the RCA was finally over, with that group's brief to the Commission expressing full support for the Gallery.⁶³ It is no wonder that the Gallery's expectations for the new decade were so high.

⁶¹ Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 1949-1951, Report, (hereafter Massey Report), (Ottawa, 1951), 77.

⁶² Massey Report, 79.

⁶³ Massey Report, 84.

CHAPTER 2

The 1950s: Masterpieces, Muddles and a Martyr

With the Massey Commission Report and the formation of the Canada Council in 1957, the arm's length principle as applied to Canadian culture was born. The federal government was, by the 1950s, beginning to acknowledge the impact of the arts on matters traditionally of the political realm, like national unity. Until the 1950s, the government, as we have seen, was largely indifferent to the Gallery, save for the annual appropriation and the odd opening event. This would soon change drastically. The Massey Commission had convinced politicians that people who read books and visit galleries represent a significant political constituency.

Being in the culture business, the National Gallery was to be affected by the structural changes in government's relationship to the arts and cultural organizations following the Massey Report. Since 1913, the Gallery's official relationship with government had not changed, with a Board of Trustees reporting to parliament through a Cabinet Minister. Then, as now, the portfolio of the minister responsible included a smorgasbord of official activities only vaguely inter-related; until the 1950s, the Gallery was lumped together with buildings and harbours.

Within a year of the Massey Commission's 1951 report, the Gallery's original governing legislation of 1913 was amended to reflect modern concerns. The wheels of government turned at lightning speed to implement the new legislation quickly -- culture was now a priority. First, the Gallery was transferred to the portfolio of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. A new mandate itemized the following functions: development, maintenance, care and management of the National Gallery, encouraging interest in fine and applied arts, promotion and exhibition of art and applied and industrial design, care of RCA deposit pieces, and finally, purchase of works of art.¹ Again, the notion of actively building a collection through purchase was given the lowest priority.

The same 1951 legislation, however, gave the Gallery tremendous financial freedom concerning expenditures. First, the Act created the National Gallery Special Operating Account in the government's Consolidated Revenue Fund, against which was to be credited "all money received by the Board by way of donation, bequest, revenue or otherwise".² For the first time, the Gallery had a second potential source for monies beyond the parliamentary appropriation. More significantly was the establishment of the National Gallery Purchase Account, also in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, to which money

¹ Canada, An Act respecting the National Gallery of Canada, 1951.

² Canada, National Gallery Act, 1951.

appropriated by Parliament could be credited. Both funds, significantly, could be carried over from one fiscal year to another, replacing the system of lapsing funds not expended by the end of a single fiscal year. This would enable the Gallery to make purchases strategically, including "saving up" for major purchases. The Gallery had been waiting for this financial flexibility and control since 1931, when advisor W.G. Constable recommended a multi-year purchase budget, based on the model of Britain's National Gallery.³

For government's part, the Purchase Account permitted the allocation of earmarked funds, separate from the annual appropriation. Governments before 1951 had not hesitated to slash the appropriation, but since the end of war, it had climbed steadily and substantially. In the new cultural climate it would be more difficult to trim an annual appropriation, which was beginning to feel like base funding. A special purchase fund could come and go with less controversy; government could use this account to top up the Gallery's funds in prosperous times or trim it during leaner times.

What was not clear in the 1951 legislation was where final authority for purchases lay. The Board was charged with "the acquisition of works of art by purchase, lease, bequest or otherwise", effectively as it had operated since

³ W. G. Constable, "Report on the National Gallery of Canada", (Ottawa, 1931), 25.

1913.⁴ The Board was expanded to nine members to better manage the new fiscal responsibilities. A vote in Parliament was still required however, to approve annual and special appropriations to the Gallery. Individual purchases drawing on the Purchase Account then required Cabinet's authorization to Treasury Board to release funds.

Like other "departmental crown corporations", the Gallery fell under the Financial Administration Act. Then as now, (with amendments in 1967), the formidable FAA sets out procedures for budgetary control for all government bodies; Treasury Board ensures that it is adhered to. The Gallery's budget required the approval first of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, then the Minister of Finance, then the President of the Treasury Board, then Cabinet committee. Annual reports were subject to scrutiny by the Auditor General at year end. The Gallery was defined as a departmental corporation for the purposes of the FAA because funds were drawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The main difference between the Gallery and a government department was a degree of greater independence concerning expenditures which was however, limited by the authority of Treasury Board. The entire budget of the Gallery was debated and voted on by Parliament as a single item in any fiscal year, comprising one line in the main estimates of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

⁴ Canada, National Gallery Act, 1951.

Treasury Board was authorized to examine and approve the estimates for the Gallery before they were included in the departmental estimates. Independence from parliamentary control therefore was qualified by Treasury Board's exercise of real financial control over the Gallery. An officer handling the Gallery dossier in the 1950s describes a paternalistic concern on behalf of Treasury Board for the Gallery's affairs: the Director needed "guarding" from political Ottawa; Treasury Board "was there to help".⁵ This relationship would change only in the next decade, following the 1962 Royal Commission on Governmental Organization (Glassco Report), which recommended that departments be given more authority for their own financial matters.

Government's special interest in the National Gallery was enhanced with the question of resolving international post-war debts. Canadian funds were tied up in several European countries and could not be withdrawn without doing damage to the fragile currency rates. The alternative was to spend the money in Europe. The allied nations of western Europe also felt a sense of gratitude to Canada for its war contribution. After lobbying by McCurry, the Canadian government diverted substantial tied funds to benefit the Gallery. Canada's pavilion at the Venice Biennale, still administered by the National Gallery, was financed this way. One dealer in Amsterdam, Van Wisselingh, was

⁵ Telephone interview with Michael Hicks, Ottawa, June 9, 1995.

instrumental in acquiring important works for the Gallery. From 1949 through 1955, the National Gallery made a string of unprecedented purchases of European art, including works by Braque, Derain, Renoir, Bonnard, Vlaminck, Dufy, Degas, Sérusier, Sisley and Van Gogh.⁶

With an acquisitions budget restored after the long, dry years of World War II, the Gallery had been purchasing European and American masterpieces at a great rate. In addition to the works acquired through tied funds, major works by Cézanne, Whistler, Turner, Murillo, Gozzoli and Cranach were purchased during the heady post-war years. Director Harry O. McCurry is credited with enlisting the support of both the Board of Trustees and key government officials for these purchases.⁷ Indeed the Gallery boasted a high-powered board, including Cleveland Morgan of Montreal, John MacAulay of Winnipeg, Vincent Massey until his resignation in 1952 (to become Governor General) and Southam until his death in 1954. During his tenure as a Board member, Massey donated 88 twentieth-century English paintings which he had purchased during his stay in England from 1935-46.⁸

Now a small but important international collection was in place. A friendly

⁶ Boggs, 41.

⁷ Boggs, 43.

⁸ Boggs, 44.

alliance existed between the Gallery and government, and both parties had repeatedly proved themselves useful to the other in past decades. The new importance attached to culture however, boosted the Gallery's sense of importance and enabled it to pursue its objectives more aggressively. Extra funds from government represented government's confidence in the good work the Gallery was doing. It was with full confidence in government support then, that the Gallery entered into negotiations for major purchases from the Liechtenstein collection.

The sale of works from the Prince of Liechtenstein's art collection in the 1950s remains a remarkable event -- it was the last time major works of the calibre of Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt were on the world market. Events of the twentieth century had dealt the Liechtenstein family the worst blows in its long and illustrious history. As early as the mid-fourteenth century, a Liechtenstein held the highest administrative position in the retinue of the Holy Roman Emperor. In the early seventeenth century, King Matthias bestowed the status of Hereditary Prince to three Liechtenstein brothers; together they ruled over much of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia (modern-day Czech Republic, Austria, and of course, Liechtenstein).⁹ With holdings including dozens of castles and palaces, the Liechtensteins ruled from the

⁹ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Liechtenstein: The Princely Collections, (New York, 1985), xii.

magnificent Garden Palace in Vienna. Built around 1700, this residence housed most of the Prince's vast collection of paintings, sculpture, firearms and porcelain. A tradition of collecting had resulted in the "greatest single private family collection in the world" dating from 1550 and first catalogued in 1612.¹⁰

In 1805 Napoleon granted sovereignty to the Principality of Liechtenstein in exchange for the family's withdrawal from the Holy Roman Empire; it joined the newly founded German confederation ten years later.¹¹ Despite its declared neutrality in both World Wars, Liechtenstein lost the dynasty's ancestral seat and significant territory with the creation of Czechoslovakia, as part of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

When Germany annexed Austria in 1938, Prince Regent Franz Josef II von Liechtenstein abandoned the Garden Palace and took up residence in the tiny territory (157 square kilometres) known today as Liechtenstein. Only here could the family hope to retain its independence and sovereignty. During the final months of World War II, the art collections were transferred out of Austria, "under perilous circumstances and at the risk of the lives of those

¹⁰ Alan Jarvis, "Art Means Business", The Royal Military College of Canada Review, Volume XXXVIII, (Kingston, 1957), 148.

¹¹ The Met., Liechtenstein, xviii.

involved".¹² The most important works were kept in storage and then displayed at the National Gallery in London, because conditions at the medieval fortress Schloss Vaduz were unsuitable. As much as 85 percent of the House's land holdings were lost after World War II, as further territory fell behind the Iron Curtain. The village of Vaduz (population under 3,000 in the 1950s) was a far cry from the glamorous, cultural hub of Europe that was Vienna.

Despite sanctioned accounts of Liechtenstein history, (Prince Franz Joseph II wrote the 1986 Metropolitan Museum exhibition catalogue foreword), the collections have not been kept entirely intact through the centuries. Following World War II, the Prince urgently needed funds to restore the infrastructure of his new little country and to establish his new residence. The sale of works from his art collection was a desperate move and one which he wanted undertaken with maximum discretion. Liechtenstein worked with a small handful of the most exclusive art dealers to put the word out about individual works for sale. With such a great collection, however, it was a "seller's market", giving the Prince the luxury of hand-picking potential purchasers; this helped minimize the sense of financial need behind the sales. Of course, when the first transactions were completed, publicity was unavoidable; the

¹² The Met., Liechtenstein, xix.

sale of cultural patrimony was a sensitive point with the Prince's subjects.¹³

By the 1950s, most European countries had legislation in place to prevent important cultural property from being exported. As the highest authority in Liechtenstein however, the Prince had ultimate authority over the disposition of his collection. In a period too, when scientific authentication of works of art was just emerging, the Liechtenstein collection had a special appeal. The provenance of each work could be accurately traced and documented, in some cases back to the artist or original patron; there were no forgeries in this collection. For the National Gallery, entering into the market for European art relatively late in the game, this was an opportunity not to be missed.

An erratic pattern of annual appropriations to the Gallery over 70 years had emerged. In prosperous times, when the work of the Gallery brought accolades to the government, funds were forthcoming. In leaner times, they were reduced drastically. While post-war purchases with tied funds were an exceptional case, they did provide a promising precedent. No one however, could have predicted the government's next move: parliamentary appropriations into seven figures over three years for purchases from the Liechtenstein collection. (Individual purchases required approval first from

¹³ National Gallery of Canada Archives, (hereafter NGC Archives), Edmond Turcotte, Canadian Ambassador to Switzerland, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, following his visit to Vaduz in October 1957.

the Gallery's Board, a parliamentary vote, and support from Cabinet to authorize Treasury Board to release funds.) Such largesse was clearly the astonishingly successful result of lobbying by McCurry and his high-powered Board. Massey and his colleagues had close ties to Prime Minister St Laurent, and no doubt were able to influence him on this decision. This period was indeed a high point in the relationship between the Gallery and government. It is not surprising that, as a result, the Gallery began to overestimate its influence with government. In fact, it also underestimated the speed with which political power and favour can change.

The National Gallery had had an interest in the Liechtenstein collection since Eric Brown first saw it in Vienna in 1927. Later the collection was on public display in Lucerne in 1948. In March 1950, Board member Cleveland Morgan visited Schloss Vaduz while on a motoring holiday in Europe. A year later the Gallery was in correspondence with Wm. H. Schab, a New York dealer in books, prints and manuscripts, and a long-time vendor to the Liechtensteins. Schab wrote confidentially to McCurry that the Prince was considering transferring his collection to South America. Under law, Schab wrote, the United States as "property custodian" would have had the authority to seize the collection in the event of future hostilities in Europe.¹⁴ In the

¹⁴ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, Wm. Schab to H.O. McCurry, March 30, 1951.

grip of the Cold War, the Prince was planning against further wartime losses.

After consultation with External Affairs Minister Lester Pearson as well as Governor General Viscount Alexander, the Gallery lost no time in writing to the Prince to request that it mount an exhibition from the Liechtenstein collection. Schab's role in the negotiations is not clear, but it is apparent he wanted to position himself as a key intermediary between Liechtenstein and the Gallery.¹⁵ It was Schab who received a response from Dr. Gustav Wilhelm, Director of the Princely Liechtenstein Art Collection: the idea of an exhibition or sale of works of art was out of the question.

Undeterred, Board Chairman H.S. Southam wrote to Wilhelm in November 1951 asking that the Prince consider the sale of his entire art collection to the National Gallery. Evidently, the idea of an exhibition had been sidestepped in favour of a much larger initiative. The Gallery had received an indication through Schab that the Princely Family wished to have Canadian dollars to acquire real estate and land, and generally to establish closer relations with Canada. The Prince would now be favourably disposed toward requests from

¹⁵ Relations between Schab and the National Gallery eventually soured and led to a lawsuit over the payment of commissions for the Liechtenstein purchases, NGC Archives, File 1.11-L.

the National Gallery of Canada.¹⁶ Only in December 1952 did the Gallery seek an estimate of the purchase cost for the entire collection, this "information necessary to strengthen our hand with government", which was by now considering the Liechtenstein purchase seriously.¹⁷ Schab provided a figure of roughly \$11-13 million for 218 paintings, adding "never before has an art collection containing so many world-famous masterpieces changed hands in recorded history."¹⁸

In the months that followed, "His Serene Highness" exercised his princely prerogative and chose to sell small groups of works from his collection through at least two dealers. In 1952, the purchase of one painting by Rembrandt and two by Filippino Lippi was approved by the Gallery's Board of Trustees at a price of \$275,000, through Schab.¹⁹ The Prince was pleased with the transaction and would consider releasing more works to the Gallery. Many letters, cables and trips to Europe later, five more paintings, by

¹⁶ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, Frederick Schab to H.O. McCurry of August 19, 1953, referring to correspondence "a few years ago" between his father and the National Gallery.

¹⁷ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, telegram, H.O. McCurry to Wm. Schab, December 17, 1952.

¹⁸ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, Wm. Schab to H.O. McCurry, December 12, 1952. One could argue that the sale of the Mantua's Gonzaga family collection or the sale of the Royal Collection after the execution of Charles I, both in the seventeenth century, were as significant.

¹⁹ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L.

Memling, Matsys, Beham, Guardi and Maes were under serious negotiation in mid-1953 through the prestigious firm of Thomas Agnew & Sons of New York.

McCurry found himself in the delicate position of negotiating without full financial authority. In September 1953 he wrote to Walter Harris, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration with full confidence of a favourable response. McCurry requested that Harris ask Cabinet to approve an amount of \$1.5 to \$2 million to purchase works from the Liechtenstein collection.²⁰ Harris responded promptly to request that McCurry draft a memorandum to Cabinet for him; not wasting such an opportunity, McCurry then asked for \$2.5 million. With the input of Treasury Board staff, Harris amended the document to his Cabinet colleagues, asking for a maximum of \$2 million, though it need not all be used. This amount was to be applied to Liechtenstein purchases only as an exceptional case, and the Gallery should expect to return to a much more modest purchase budget in the future. Confidentiality was also dictated by the Cabinet document; there was to be no publicity until the purchases were completed. Cabinet document 244/53 of October 7, 1953 includes Cabinet's "firm commitment" to the purchases and recommends that Parliament appropriate the funds.

²⁰ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, Harry O. McCurry to Minister Harris, September 30, 1953.

Within the month, Treasury Board had acted on Cabinet's recommendation. R.B. Bryce, Secretary to the Treasury Board advised McCurry that the Gallery could draw up to \$250,000 against vote 115, "Miscellaneous and Unforeseen Expenses" to pursue the purchases with some serious cash on hand. In effect, funds could be obtained without a parliamentary vote. The remaining amount owed would go into the Supplementary Estimates for 1953/4 to Parliament at the end of March. Harris gave his assurance that a parliamentary vote would support Cabinet's recommendation, and, in anticipation of this, Treasury Board prepared their authorization on December 15, 1953. Parliament voted funds to the Gallery on January 31, 1954, followed by a further amount in the March supplementary estimates. Close to \$700,000 was required to complete the second transaction.

The Gallery did not rest on this success, recognizing that government favour was shining on them. Early in 1954, with Liechtenstein works and promised funds still available, the Board of Trustees recorded their interest in pursuing four more paintings, two by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin and one by each of Peter Paul Rubens and Simone Martini.²¹ As soon as the new fiscal year started in April 1954, a submission from the Gallery was made to Treasury Board, recommending that a further \$500,000 be allocated for Liechtenstein purchases against Vote 114 [sic], "Miscellaneous and Unforeseen Expenses".

²¹ Boggs, 43.

This loophole had worked so well for the Gallery once, why not use it again?

Senior officials who were not necessarily art aficionados soon gave their answer. In May, the new Secretary to the Treasury Board, John J. Deutsch wrote to Laval Fortier, Deputy Minister at Citizenship and Immigration under Walter Harris. Deutsch recommended against what he considered an irregular financial practice; the expenses were entirely foreseen and the amount of money very large. Slowing the purchase process considerably, Deutsch advised that the \$500,000 be included in the Final Supplementary Estimates at year end, in March 1955.²²

Treasury Board officials were also reacting against the unpredictable and irrepressible Prince of Liechtenstein who demanded swift payment. Writing to Agnew in June 1954, McCurry remarked:

...I must confess that the Government officials are getting a little restive about the prods they regularly receive on the subject of paying our accounts with the Prince. His attitude is extraordinary and is not likely to engender any great co-operativeness on the part of our Treasury officials.²³

Treasury Board finally authorized the purchases in February 1956, after McCurry had retired in 1955.

²² NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, John J. Deutsch to Laval Fortier, May 6, 1954.

²³ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, Harry O. McCurry to Geoffrey Agnew, June 22, 1954.

The main reason for the delayed payment was not Treasury Board fatigue, but a ploy on the part of the Gallery's Trustees to make the biggest coup of all from Liechtenstein: a painting, Portrait of a Young Woman, by Leonardo da Vinci. With Jack Pickersgill having replaced Harris as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, there was renewed enthusiasm at the top for the Gallery. Through the fall of 1954, the Gallery, through Agnew, negotiated very aggressively for a group of paintings. Pickersgill and Harris, as Finance Minister, both gave their support for payment of \$1.5 million for the Leonardo, plus with \$1.6 million for the Matsys, the Chardins and the Martini.²⁴ Ultimately, hopes of acquiring the Leonardo were sabotaged by the aggressive approach which the Prince did not appreciate; he would hold onto the Leonardo until his financial situation grew more desperate.²⁵

By the mid-1950s, the Gallery had reached a point where it was no longer a small-scale diversion for Ottawa's elite, a backdrop for social events. It was now operating with a large budget and staff, and with, apparently, a considerable degree of favour and independence from government. This period was marked by electioneering and changes in government at the

²⁴ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, Jack Pickersgill, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, memo to the National Gallery, October 22, 1954.

²⁵ NGC Archives, File 1.11-L, Geoffrey Agnew to Harry O. McCurry, December 17, 1954. The National Gallery of Art in Washington purchased the Leonardo.

federal level. The Liberals' long reign in Ottawa was about to come to an end.

In the search for a new Gallery director to replace McCurry, insiders Donald Buchanan and Robert Hubbard were both passed over, a departure from the tradition of grooming and selecting directors internally. The influential sister-brother team of Frances Barwick and Douglas Duncan lobbied for their old and close friend Alan Jarvis; the two men had been lovers in the 1940s. His candidacy was also supported by Vincent Massey and Kenneth Clark from Jarvis's days in England. Other key Liberals, including Jack Pickersgill who made the hiring decision, encouraged Jarvis to apply.²⁶

Jarvis, an Ontario-born Rhodes scholar and trained sculptor, had spent 14 years in England. At Oxford he studied philosophy and aesthetics. He was blessed with good looks and charisma, and used them to his best advantage to promote the Gallery. Within Canada Jarvis travelled extensively to speak publicly about the National Gallery, giving over 100 speeches in his first year at the Gallery,²⁷ while "introduc[ing] something of the theatre into that staid establishment".²⁸ Jarvis organized a television series and a newspaper

²⁶ "The Things We See", CBC Tuesday Night, September 16, 1975.

²⁷ Boggs, 46.

²⁸ National Gallery of Canada, *Fifth Annual Review*, (Ottawa, 1972-73), 11.

column entitled "The Things We See". He is credited with making the Gallery accessible to a larger public than ever before, both in Ottawa and across Canada. By nature, Jarvis was naturally inclined more toward public programming than the less visible work of building the collection.

Jarvis posed a marked contrast to the team of McCurry and Hubbard, both conventional Ottawa "insiders". Despite his obvious talents, Jarvis's flamboyant personal style, combined with his impatience with parochial views about art, ultimately worked against him. Official Ottawa in the 1950s probably also took a dim view of his homosexuality, barely concealed by his married status.²⁹ Typically, some Canadians sought to shoot down Jarvis's star:

there is no quicker way to damnation in Canada than to be caught in 'high-falutin' attitudes, deservedly or not to earn the epithet 'high-brow'." ³⁰

Jean Sutherland Boggs describes "differences between Jarvis and the whole machinery of the government...he was clearly an alien if exotic figure in the Ottawa bureaucracy".³¹ Others close to Jarvis described him both fondly and

²⁹ Around the time of his appointment, Jarvis married a widow with three children because he felt the director of the National Gallery should be a married man. "The Things We See", CBC Tuesday Night, September 16, 1975.

³⁰ Wolf H. Heick, History and Myth, Arthur Lower and the Making of Canadian Nationalism, (Vancouver: 1975), 118.

³¹ Boggs, 50.

critically as "phoney", "over-eager to please", as well as an ideas man with little ability to administer and follow-up.³² His friend and planned biographer Robert Fulford paints Jarvis in moving terms:

On his best days Jarvis reached for a certain nobility of spirit; he had a marvellously spontaneous gaiety; and he could inspire others to their best efforts.³³

A young and relatively inexperienced museum director, Jarvis enlarged the decision-making process at the senior level of the Gallery. Since 1952, the Board comprised nine members. The Chairman, Charles Fell lacked the single-minded vision of his predecessors, encouraging his members to participate more actively in the administration of the Gallery. For the first time senior staff were invited to board meetings. Then Jarvis engaged five external advisors to recommend on purchases. While more voices were heard, there was not always consensus, thus diluting the political clout, vision and direction of the Gallery.³⁴ Jarvis would find himself without solid support in a crunch.

During his first year on the job, Jarvis had to complete the transaction for the purchase of the Liechtenstein Chardins and the Martini negotiated by

³² "The Things We See", CBC Tuesday Night, September 16, 1975.

³³ Robert Fulford in Saturday Night, (October 1985) 6.

³⁴ Boggs, 52.

McCurry before his retirement. Whereas politicians and the public were familiar with the bigger names of the first purchases like Rembrandt and Lippi, Simone Martini was unknown to most Canadians in the 1950s. This third lot of Liechtenstein purchases was problematic too, because of the higher purchase price. The first paintings by the best-known artists sold for an average of \$55,000 each, while the Chardins and Martini were over \$200,000 each. Attributable to the collectible nature of these small-scale works and an improvement in the art market, this boost in prices gave the Gallery's opponents ammunition for attack. A lack of public appeal for the works of art, combined with the large amounts spent on non-Canadian purchases made the National Gallery susceptible to public criticism.

The first annual report authored by Jarvis in the summer of 1955 covered fiscal year 1954/5. An indirect rebuttal to critics of the Liechtenstein purchases is included in it:

It is gratifying to note that in the widespread publicity which the purchase of pictures from the collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein has received in the world's press as well as in the Parliament and press of Canada the consensus was overwhelmingly congratulatory and the purchase is regarded not only as a wise one but, under present market conditions, a shrewd one.³⁵

A more important passage in the 1954/5 report was a call from the Gallery

³⁵ National Gallery of Canada, Annual Report, 1954/5, 5.

for an unprecedented degree of legislated independence from government:

...they [the Trustees] reiterate that the time has indeed come when the Gallery should be established as a completely independent unit, able to recruit specialist personnel directly and with a wholly autonomous administration. The Board of Trustees is now considering a formal request for alterations in our legislation which will establish the National Gallery under a fresh Act of Parliament.³⁶

Here one senses that, only four years after receiving a generous new mandate, the Gallery was starting to overestimate its already privileged position with government. Terms like "completely independent" and "wholly autonomous" no doubt rankled government.

Within a few weeks of Treasury Board's approval of the last Liechtenstein purchases, an article in the London Times brought international attention to the Gallery's acquisitions. Entitled "Masterpieces on the Move", the article expressed some regret about major European works of art in "exile" in North America, but concluded in favour of the purchases by a now culturally mature young nation like Canada.³⁷ More publicity in the Canadian press would follow.

Three days later the Liechtenstein purchase was debated in the House of Commons. One Member of Parliament criticized Jarvis for his unapologetic

³⁶ National Gallery of Canada, Annual Report, 6.

³⁷ "Masterpieces on the Move," Editorial, London Times, March 19, 1956.

elitism, reminding him of his role as public servant.³⁸ In hindsight, Jarvis might have given more attention to the criticism of the Gallery during this same debate by opposition Member of Parliament John Diefenbaker. On March 22, 1956 he expounded:

With all due regard to the benefits that flow from viewing art for art's sake and pictures that are painted outside our country, I feel that first and foremost the national gallery in the capital city should be one to encourage, develop and expand Canadian art.³⁹

There can be no doubt that Diefenbaker's remarks were rooted in the fact that the National Gallery was, ideologically and practically, a creation of the Liberals. In fact the notion of culture as a civilizing force and a facet of international relations belonged with the Liberals. In St Laurent's government, it was Brooke Claxton, an internationalist, who made the Massey Commission happen. For decades, Vincent Massey, a Liberal, had been a strong supporter of the Gallery, financing the fit-up of the new building in 1960. St. Laurent's government had approved and financed each of the Liechtenstein purchases from 1952 on. To the Opposition, the Gallery was a clear and easy target for the more practical-minded Tories and their followers.

³⁸ Boggs, 51.

³⁹ Boggs, 51.

Following the March 1956 debate in the House of Commons, the media jumped into the fray. Gallery records indicate that "leading articles appeared almost every day in Canadian periodicals" on the subject of the Liechtenstein purchases, "the majority of informed opinion was congratulatory in tone".⁴⁰ Naturally, the dissenting voices were the loudest. One critic calculated the expenditure to be the equivalent of 6,000 grain-fed steers.⁴¹ At one point, a story about the Liechtenstein Leonardo da Vinci for sale emerged, further fuelling the hysteria for and against European purchases. Here, at least, was a "name" that most recognized.

Riding a growing wave of nationalism, many people objected to the expenditure of large sums on non-Canadian artists. Extreme voices were calling for the purchase of exclusively Canadian work, as a subsidy of sorts to living artists. This period was, of course, immediately pre-Canada Council, and no grants existed. Inflammatory comments like Diefenbaker's were either spoken out of ignorance of the facts and of the Gallery's mandate, or simply to stir up a hornet's nest at the expense of the Liberal government. The National Gallery was forced to respond to criticisms with painfully obvious answers: there were no Canadian "Old Masters", so their purchase of many Canadian works of art could never total that of the Liechtenstein

⁴⁰ National Gallery of Canada, Annual Report, 1956/7, 10.

⁴¹ National Gallery of Canada, Annual Report, 1955/6, 14.

masterpieces.

Opposition critics aside, the Gallery continued to pursue Liechtenstein purchases undeterred. The annual appropriation had suddenly fallen to its lowest level since World War II; the long post-war honeymoon with government was over. By 1957, only \$441,000 of the promised purchase funds remained, and Cabinet approval had to be given for each purchase.

The nineteenth-century model of the Gallery director as "keeper" of the collection was still firmly in place in the 1950s. Jarvis carried on as previous Gallery directors before him in making many decisions about purchasing, guided only by personal taste, instinct, and training. He was certainly undeterred by his colour-blindness, claiming it made him better appreciate the sculptural qualities of a two-dimensional work of art.⁴² Eric Brown had toured artists' studios and commercial galleries, hand-picking works for the collection. Harry McCurry had identified which Liechtenstein paintings to put before the Board for approval. As late as 1965, curator R.H. Hubbard stated "It is a tremendous advantage to a museum to have at its head, a man with an eye for good painting"⁴³. It might be said that Jarvis acted no differently, although perhaps somewhat immodestly. Speaking in late 1956, Jarvis boasted

⁴² "The Things We See", CBC Tuesday Night, September 16, 1975.

⁴³ Hubbard in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 127.

about his personal sway with government:

...I can go to government, as I did last spring, and say that I want \$885,000 with which to buy four pictures, all quite small ones, too, and get it through the House of Commons.⁴⁴

With such emphasis on the first person singular, it seems evident that Jarvis was inadvertently positioning himself as an individual target for government criticism.

The complex chronology of events around the ill-fated purchases makes an analysis of those events rather difficult. Although Cabinet documents from this period were only made public in the late 1980s, other key archival material seems to be missing. For example, Gallery lore refers to an openly hostile, expletive-filled memo from Jarvis to Minister Fairclough which cannot be found, if it ever existed.⁴⁵

It began in January 1957 with correspondence between the Gallery and H.S. Schaeffer of the Schaeffer Gallery in New York on the subject of a painting by Pieter Brueghel in the collection of Baron Gerhard Von Polnitz of Schloss Aschbach in Bavaria. Entitled Landscape with Christ Appearing to the

⁴⁴ Alan Jarvis in The Royal Military College of Canada Review, 145.

⁴⁵ Ellen Fairclough claimed that she and Alan Jarvis emerged from the Liechtenstein affair as close friends, so it is doubtful that such a memo existed. "The Things We See", CBC Tuesday Night, September 16, 1975.

Apostles, this work was being offered for \$420,000. Another painting, Virgin of the Annunciation by Lorenzo Monaco belonged to the Prince of Liechtenstein, and was being sold through Geoffrey Agnew's firm in New York.

John Diefenbaker had in 1956 replaced George Drew as leader of the Progressive Conservatives, then in opposition. In June 1957, Diefenbaker led his party to a minority victory over St. Laurent's Liberal government and was returned to a majority government in the election of March 31, 1958. If the Gallery at any time doubted that the new Conservative cabinet would honour the commitments of the previous Liberal cabinet, it is not apparent from archival records. Both senior staff and Trustees spoke of the 1953 Liechtenstein "fund" as a given; in fact there was no fund, only a commitment from a previous government.

During the Board meeting of September 1957, Chief Curator Dr. R.H. Hubbard reported favourably on his examination of the Brueghel, still in Germany. The Trustees discussed the remaining purchase monies and agreed to apply them to major purchases. Then, significantly, Jarvis was to "consult with Treasury officials concerning the Liechtenstein funds and also to continue negotiations with Dr. Hans Schaeffer, agent for the Brueghel." These monies, however, had not been voted by Parliament; only about \$10,000 remained in

the National Gallery Purchase fund.

It would appear that Jarvis did not discuss the proposed purchases with Treasury officials as instructed. Rather, all contact appears to have taken place at the ministerial level, which suggests either a strategic error on the part of Jarvis or a lack of understanding of the machinery of government. He had not, however, been inattentive to Treasury Board in the past, rather the opposite.⁴⁶ Quite possibly, officials at Treasury Board in 1958 neglected to advise Jarvis or gave him bad advice on how to proceed with the purchases. Two key Treasury Board officers, Helen Small and Michael Hicks, who had both handled the Gallery file and earlier Liechtenstein purchases, left the Board in 1956 and 1957 respectively. With them was lost the "institutional memory" of previous Gallery / Treasury Board negotiations. Mrs. Small described her successors as "embarrassed" by the outcome, and stated her belief that the matter was mishandled by Treasury Board.⁴⁷

By January 1958, with no Treasury Board input, the Board gave its approval to purchase the Brueghel and the Monaco. The Board further instructed

⁴⁶ Michael Hicks, a Treasury Board officer in the 1950s, described how Jarvis charmed him with lunches at the Rideau Club and gave him a letter of introduction to Douglas Duncan of the Picture Loan Society in Toronto. Telephone interview, Ottawa, June 6, 1995.

⁴⁷ Personal interview with Helen Small, Ottawa, June 12, 1995.

Jarvis to write to the new (Acting) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in Diefenbaker's government, Edmund Davie Fulton, also once a Rhodes scholar. Jarvis's letter of January 30, 1958 requests two things: that Cabinet revise Cabinet Document 422/53 of October 7, 1953 to permit the purchase of a non-Liechtenstein work and that the Minister instruct Treasury Board to authorize the Gallery to enter into negotiations.

The same month of the Board meeting, January 1958, saw the dissolution of Parliament, and a new Conservative government in place as of the election of March 31, 1958. The Gallery, like other government departments, was in political limbo for those three months.

Archival records indicate that by mid-April 1958, Fulton, still acting Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, agreed to re-submit the Gallery's request to negotiate for the Brueghel and the Monaco. Jarvis assured Fulton that funds in the "Liechtenstein account" would cover both paintings; the Brueghel could be had for \$350,000 and the Monaco for \$95,000.⁴⁸ Fulton advised Jarvis by telephone on May 2 that Cabinet had approved the purchase of the Brueghel and the Monaco. Here perhaps, Jarvis made a critical misstep by assuming that Cabinet approval would ensure parliamentary support. For his part,

⁴⁸ NGC Archives, File 3-12, Alan Jarvis to Minister Fulton, April 18, 1958.

Fulton apparently believed that the funds had been previously appropriated by Parliament.

With only Fulton's word concerning Cabinet's consent, Jarvis immediately began active negotiation with Schaeffer and Agnew. Firm prices, payment terms and delivery schedules were confirmed with the dealers in the first week of May 1958. Only when communicating the news to Treasury Board, did the Gallery learn about problems with the purchase fund. Notes from a telephone conversation by Agnew describe Jarvis's explanation for a delay:

There has been a muddle in the Finance Ministry and we cannot pay by June 15th...the Ministry did not realize that the money would have to be voted. They thought it was already there left over from the last transaction. I'm sure it will be all right.⁴⁹

Two days later, Jarvis communicated the same news to Polnitz:

...there has been a misunderstanding with the Cabinet Minister concerned, who did not realize that this expenditure would require a vote in Parliament on what we call Supplementary Estimates, and I was instructed to hold our offer, at any rate until the matter could be referred again to the Government. These estimates cannot now come before Parliament until June 15th at the earliest, although there should be no great delay after that.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ NGC Archives, File 3-12, telephone conversation between Alan Jarvis and Geoffrey Agnew, as recorded by the latter, May 8, 1958.

⁵⁰ NGC Archives, File 3-12, Alan Jarvis to Baron von Polnitz, May 12, 1958.

The same day, Jarvis wrote a rather confusing letter to Fulton detailing the events of the previous ten days. First, he told Fulton how he had made it clear to the dealers that he was only at the stage of negotiation, although correspondence indicates that firm offers were made. Jarvis then contradicts himself and says that the dealers could and should expect that negotiation necessarily culminates in purchase:

Both of these men have been dealing with the National Gallery for over 25 years and they have naturally assumed that if the Director asks them to negotiate for a picture that he has full Government support....The situation, it seems to me, points up with perfect clarity what the Trustees have been saying for the past years, that they will never be able successfully to negotiate for the purchase of any important works of art if they do not have the same kind of assurance they had in the past that substantial funds have been earmarked for National Gallery purchases...⁵¹

In the intervening weeks, however, Fulton was replaced by Ellen Fairclough as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. She referred the matter to the Justice department which, on July 8, 1958 gave its opinion that a binding contract had been entered into with Polnitz, because letters of offer had been written on May 2 and 3. Permission to negotiate was, under the circumstances, permission to buy, if the vendor met the price. The situation with Agnew was somewhat different because more business had been conducted by telephone. Fairclough and the Cabinet essentially ignored legal

⁵¹ NGC Archives, File 3-12, Alan Jarvis to Minister Fulton, May 12, 1958.

counsel and concluded that authority to negotiate was not the same as authority to purchase.

Both injured parties sought legal counsel to represent them to the government of Canada. Writing on August 20, 1958 Agnew's firm hit the nail on the head with its request for damages:

It would seem to Agnew's that the Canadian Government is sheltering behind a legal technicality. The Canadian Cabinet gave a definite decision shortly before May 6th to buy the Lorenzo Monaco. That decision was communicated to Mr. Agnew by Mr. Jarvis and he was instructed to act on it. On May 8, after their instructions had been carried out, the Canadian Cabinet must have reversed their decision because, for reasons known only to themselves, but connected, perhaps, with the fact that when in opposition they had criticised the purchase of works of Art for the National Gallery, they had decided not to bring the matter before Parliament...

The situation between Fairclough and the Gallery went from bad to worse in September when the Board's Chairman, Charles Fell refused to sign letters prepared by the Minister's office which suggested that Jarvis had acted without authority:

It is the opinion of the Trustees that the Board, by corporate act, authorized the purchase of the Brueghel....The Board did also in the same minutes by corporate act, authorize the purchase of the Monaco...The Board of Trustees for these and other reasons is unanimously of the opinion that the purchase should be completed.⁵²

⁵² NGC Archives, File 3-12, Charles Fell to Minister Fairclough, September 6, 1958.

Undeterred, Fairclough herself wrote to Agnew's lawyer on September 16, 1958 explaining that her predecessor, Fulton had been led to believe that there was an unexpended balance of money previously appropriated by Parliament available...

but, when it was made to appear that there was no such unexpended balance of money appropriated by Parliament, neither my predecessor nor myself has been prepared to ask Parliament to authorize an expenditure, during the present difficult time, of almost \$100,000 for one picture."

Fairclough would not even permit the matter to go before Parliament in what might have been a generous and fair gesture on her part. The purchases were effectively scuttled at the cabinet level. Unfriendly correspondence continued between Fairclough and Agnew into 1959, concluding in October with a Cabinet decision to pay Agnew \$7,000 in damages.

There was still the matter of the Brueghel to resolve, which was now being discussed directly with an increasingly agitated Baron von Polnitz. On September 24, 1958 Jarvis and Fell met with Fairclough--not a happy session. She instructed the Gallery to write Polnitz without delay or she would intervene herself. Following a delay of several weeks, J.R. Veit, Secretary to the Board wrote to Polnitz, indicating that the Gallery did not intend to purchase the Brueghel and that, in the opinion of the Justice Department, no binding contract had been made. It would appear that Justice officials had changed their tune since May. Veit further explained that neither Parliament

nor Treasury Board had sanctioned the purchase.

When the Board met on October 22, 1958, the members were in unanimous agreement on the Gallery's unworkable legal mandate in the area of purchasing. Jarvis and Veit were authorized to discuss with Ministers of Citizenship and Immigration, Finance and Justice,

possible revisions to the National Gallery Act, in order to achieve a more practical operation within the framework of government and in order to avoid the recurrence of situations embarrassing to the government, to the Board of Trustees and to the Director.⁵³

By early 1959, both deals had completely soured and much finger-pointing was going on. Gallery officials realized that they had lost the battle; Cabinet would not be persuaded to honour its original vote of support for the purchases. Rather than blame Treasury Board for slipping up, the full blame was laid at the feet of the Gallery: authority to negotiate did not, apparently, include entering into an agreement to purchase. This was hair-splitting of the worst order especially in the art world, where gentlemen's agreements guided all business. Under instructions from Diefenbaker and Cabinet, Fairclough asked for Jarvis's resignation.

⁵³ NGC Archives, File 3-12, Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Canada, October 22, 1958.

In opposition, the Liberals did what they could to help, but in vain. In February 1959, Jack Pickersgill, who had served as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration from July 1954 to 1957, posed questions embarrassing to the government in the House of Commons about the failed purchases. A month later, Lester Pearson addressed the matter in the House, concluding

it is a confused, unhappy situation which brings no credit to the government and which, on the contrary, has resulted in a good deal of discredit...to the name of Canada in those circles which are concerned with art..."⁵⁴

Hostile letters continued to arrive from Polnitz, demanding interest payments and threatening legal action. The Baron did not sell his painting. As postscript, the attribution of this work to Brueghel is now in doubt. Ironically, Diefenbaker may have averted the National Gallery's purchase a "school of" Breughel at a Brueghel price.

No doubt Fairclough was under considerable pressure as the first female minister in a "mean-spirited" cabinet to be tough on the Gallery.⁵⁵ Jarvis had already lived through a feud with Finance Minister Donald Fleming over the Gallery's purchase of a Picasso; Fairclough recalled how Jarvis just laughed when she sneered at the modern master.⁵⁶ In opposition, the

⁵⁴ Boggs, 52.

⁵⁵ Personal interview with Helen Small, Ottawa, June 12, 1995.

⁵⁶ "The Things We See", CBC Tuesday Night, September 16, 1975.

Conservatives attacked the Gallery; it is no surprise that they behaved the way they did in power. It was an easy opportunity to take a swing at the highbrows, traditionally anathema to the pragmatic Tories, and particularly to their leader. Diefenbaker was not so much malicious as "indifferent" toward the Gallery.⁵⁷ One wonders at the naiveté of Gallery officials' expectation that a Conservative regime would dispense funds as its predecessor had.

The fallout from this debacle was severe. Fell resigned as Chairman on July 1, 1959, Jarvis followed on October 1, 1959, followed the next day by board member Cleveland Morgan, who wished to protest Jarvis's departure. The Annual Report of 1959/60 suggests that the Gallery was anxious to distance itself from the unfortunate events of the last year. A short dry sentence describes Jarvis' departure, while Morgan receives little more recognition.

As Jarvis often said later, "Diefenbaker blew the brains out of Ottawa".⁵⁸ He was, in the words of Robert Fulford, "inconsolable".⁵⁹ He did carry on with other interesting projects but had ultimately lost his true métier and

⁵⁷ Personal interview with Helen Small, Ottawa, June 12, 1995.

⁵⁸ Fulford in Saturday Night, 7.

⁵⁹ Fulford in Saturday Night, 7.

self-confidence. His marriage dissolved. Suffering from arthritis, alcoholism, and finally cirrhosis of the liver, Jarvis declined slowly through the 1960s, and died prematurely, alone, in 1972. The Gallery's Bulletin of 1972/3 includes an eloquent tribute to Jarvis. In his autobiography Sir Kenneth Clark wrote "Alan was the handsomest man I have ever seen....but his face was his misfortune, and the last years of his life were a tragedy."⁶⁰

A testament to the loyalty that many people held for Jarvis even after his death are the biased accounts of the failed purchases. Jean Sutherland Boggs considered the promised dollars as an existing "fund" and the outcome the result of a "Cabinet mistake".⁶¹ Jack Pickersgill suggested a vendetta on the part of Diefenbaker; George Ignatieff thought the new government was "reneging" on the promise of a previous government; Charles Fell cited Cabinet's "betrayal" of the National Gallery by its "welshing" on a decision of Treasury Board.⁶² Robertson Davies expressed his feelings in a more literary fashion. In the last pages of What's Bred in the Bone, he introduces the character of Alwin Ross, clearly a fictionalized Alan Jarvis. Like Jarvis, Ross was a Canadian who studied and worked in England, returning to Canada to become the

⁶⁰ Fulford in Saturday Night, 6.

⁶¹ Boggs, 53.

⁶² "The Things We See", CBC Tuesday Night, September 16, 1975.

director of the National Gallery. Ross too, is charming, handsome and gay. While indicting the female cabinet minister character over the lost purchase of a European masterpiece, Davies paints a sympathetic portrait of Ross.⁶³

We have seen that, during a difficult period, the Gallery was ill-served by an ambiguous legal status. In better times, the "national" museums enjoyed a good deal of actual if not formal independence because of the looseness of their ties to whatever departments had theoretically supervised them.⁶⁴

The same "looseness", however, offered the Gallery no protection against an antagonistic government.

For the National Gallery, there were several lessons to be learned from this debacle. First, that the Gallery's administrative practices had to be brought into the twentieth century. Second, that as an important instrument of culture, the Gallery was a highly political institution. Gallery staff could no longer pretend that they were immune from the dirty business of politics; to pretend otherwise was dangerously naive. The final and most difficult lesson was that, despite tradition, practice, and even legislation, the political masters ultimately had the last word.

⁶³ Robertson Davies, What's Bred in the Bone, pp. 506-7.

⁶⁴ George Woodcock, Strange Bedfellows, p. 106

CHAPTER 3

The National Gallery Grows Up: Stripes, Strife, and Strategies for Survival

The National Gallery, of course, survived its first major run-in with the Canadian government. It emerged from the Liechtenstein debacle tougher and wiser concerning political matters. The next three decades of Gallery/government relations however, were by no means all harmonious. Other controversies as well as major structural changes again tested both institutions' tolerance and the arm's length relationship. For the first time controversy surrounding abstract art was added to the already complex equation.

The National Gallery's relationship with government took a drastic turn of direction in the 1960s. Seized with a post-Massey Commission and pre-Centennial awareness of culture, Pearson's Liberals "decided to make a new and vigorous approach to the problem of support for the arts and other cultural activities".¹ The ambitious Secretary of State Maurice Lamontagne saw his portfolio enlarge significantly in 1963 with the addition of the Canada Council, National Archives, CBC, NFB, the

¹ Bernard Ostry, The Cultural Connection: An essay on Culture and Government Policy in Canada, (Toronto, 1978), 100.

Centennial Commission and the "national" museums. Under Lamontagne, the Canada Council received its first government funds, first as a special grant in 1965, then as an annual appropriation in 1967/8.²

In 1965, Lamontagne commissioned Gordon Sheppard to report on the current status of "the cultural policy and activities of the Government of Canada". The terms of reference were very broad, but included recommendations for improving or better coordinating the policies of federal arts organizations, agencies and departments. Less than one year later, Mr. Sheppard delivered his plus 1000 page, four-volume tome to Lamontagne's successor as Secretary of State, Judy LaMarsh. Many of the report's recommendations were implemented, including the Canadian Conservation Institute, the Canadian Heritage Information Network, and the National Exhibition Centres, all under the umbrella of the corporation of National Museums of Canada (NMC). The rough model was to be Washington's Smithsonian Institution.³

With regard to the National Gallery, Sheppard cited its troubled legal status, the need for new legislation and the fallout from the recent Crysler

² Ostry, 100.

³ Gordon Sheppard, A Special Report on the Cultural Policy and Activities of the Government of Canada, (Ottawa, May 1966), volume II, p. 255.

exhibition.⁴ He did not however, unequivocally support the notion of the National Gallery joining the NMC. Sheppard acknowledged that, based on his consultations with museum officials, a merged National Gallery might lose its special character; he believed that further analysis of this possibility was required.⁵ Anticipating the new NMC legislation, the Gallery's Chairman Jean W. Ostiguy expressed the Board's concern in a letter to Prime Minister Pearson in December 1967. He spoke of the potential loss of identity for the gallery and the dilution of the authority of the director: "in order to direct, one must have authority over administration".⁶

In the hands of zealous Secretary of State officials, some of the nuance of Sheppard's report was lost. In 1968, the NMC was created as a departmental corporation by an Act of Parliament, "to rationalize the administration of institutions which were to have enhanced resources to respond to the new consciousness of our heritage, partly attributed to the success of Expo '67".⁷ In hindsight, the perspective was different:

the 1968 Act moved with the fashion of the time, which

⁴ The Gallery hosted a travelling exhibition from the Chrysler Collection, which was publicly revealed to contain many works of dubious authenticity.

⁵ Sheppard, Volume II, p. 255.

⁶ Canada. Report and Recommendations of the task force charged with examining federal policy concerning museums, (Withrow-Richard Report), (Ottawa, 1986), 19.

⁷ Ostry, 102.

regarded orderliness, tidiness and large scale in public administration almost as ends in themselves.⁸

Following the new legislation, the Gallery became one of four "national" museums anticipating the benefits of promised "enhanced resources". The acquisition budget, by 1972, reached \$1.5 million per year; this was the payoff. For the first time since 1913, however, the Gallery was without administrative autonomy and its own Board of Trustees. It now reported to Parliament through the Secretary-General of the NMC and a Cabinet Minister. Perhaps the biggest loss was the Purchase Account, as the Gallery returned to strictly annual funding. Consolation to the Gallery was offered by the creation of a "Visiting Committee" to counsel the NMC Board of Trustees on acquisitions; between three and five members also sat on the NMC Board. The Visiting Committee was, in effect, a "shadow" board, and offered consistent support to the Gallery in its dealings with the NMC.

The 1968 legislation however, was ambiguous. Over the years, there was enough latitude within the Act to permit the growth of a gigantic, centralist and politically charged bureaucracy. The National Museums Policy, formulated in 1972 in response to the 1968 legislation, was plain in its political agenda: the NMC was "an instrument to assist in the

⁸ Withrow-Richard Report, (Ottawa, September 1986), 18.

accomplishment of the Government's cultural objectives".⁹ Within this policy the National Gallery's three primary functions were defined as: record, preserve, understand; communicate; manage.¹⁰ Once again, there was no specific mention of building the collections.

By the 1980s, the priorities and direction of the National Gallery were clearly divergent from those of National Museums of Canada. The Applebaum-Hébert Report of 1982 redefined the Gallery's proper primary function as building and researching the collection; this activity was jeopardized by "blind pursuit of nationalistic policy" imposed by the NMC.¹¹ Blatantly political projects like the Discovery Train contributed little to the work of the museums.¹² As early as 1982, the Applebaum-Hébert Task Force was critical of the NMC. Jockeying for more control over purchasing, the Gallery was granted a multi-year purchase fund, which could be carried through a maximum of three years. This would enable the gallery to "save up" for major expenditures, while waiting out years in which the offerings on the art market were slim.

⁹ National Gallery of Canada, Medium-Term Plan, (Ottawa, 1984), 1.

¹⁰ National Gallery of Canada, Medium-Term Plan, (Ottawa, 1984), 1.

¹¹ Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, Summary of briefs and hearings, (Applebaum-Hébert), (Ottawa, 1982), 71.

¹² By interesting contrast, long-term cultural bureaucrat Bernard Ostry described the Discovery Train as among "the finest expressions of human imagination and art and skill", The Cultural Connection, (Toronto, 1978), 170.

In January 1986, Minister of Communications Marcel Masse set up the National Museums Task Force, co-chaired by Clément Richard and William Withrow. The report, quoted above, was unambiguous: the NMC, always "process driven" rather than "product driven", had to go immediately.¹³ Upon submission of the report to Minister Flora MacDonald in September 1986, its recommendations were accepted. The entire museum community, especially the National Gallery, responded favourably.

Recent experience had shown however, that Crown Corporation status for other cultural institutions brought no guarantee of freedom from government interference. Efforts to rein in the powers of Crown Corporations followed the 1979 Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability (Lambert Commission). As recently as 1984, Trudeau's government had introduced Bill C-24 to gain more control over Crown corporations and government agencies, including the Canada Council.

Trudeau's view was basically that the control of a nation's cultural life, and especially of its arts, is essential for the consolidation of political power, and cultural policies should be directed towards supporting a government's principal aims.¹⁴

¹³ Withrow-Richard Report, (Ottawa, 1986), 19.

¹⁴ Woodcock, 107.

In the 1980s, political affiliations did not protect cultural institutions as they had in the past; Timothy Porteous, Director of the Canada Council, had once worked in Trudeau's office. After a highly public battle, and with the support of the Conservatives in Opposition, cultural agencies were exempted from Bill C-24. The Canada Council continues to operate outside of the Financial Administration Act.¹⁵

While the four national museums would ultimately have more than three years to prepare for their new legal status, the situation at the National Gallery was exceptionally complicated. The new building on Sussex Drive was under construction, the grand opening to be held in May 1988. With new legislation on the drafting table, however, this was the moment to shift the Gallery in the desired direction. An NMC committee defined the Gallery's four new "purposes", which were then fine tuned by the Privy Council Office and the Justice Department in collaboration with the Gallery's new Director, Dr. Shirley Thomson. Explicit in the process to shift the Gallery to Crown Corporation status was the wish "to lengthen the arm of government".¹⁶ The Gallery agreed to a financial and

¹⁵ A private Reform Party member's bill, C-263, was in second reading on May 1995. If passed, this bill would bring the Canada Council and five other Crown Corporations under the FAA.

¹⁶ "National Gallery of Canada: Transition to Independence" (Ottawa, 1987).

administrative existence guided by the FAA, while an internal power struggle at Treasury Board landed the Gallery under the control of the Program Branch, with closer ties to government than the Crown Corporations Directorate.¹⁷

Bill C-12, the Museums Act, received first reading in the House of Commons on May 3, 1989 and final assent on July 1, 1990. In it are described the new "corporate objects" of the National Gallery:

to develop, maintain and make known, throughout Canada and internationally, a collection of works of art, both historic and contemporary, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, and to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of art in general among all Canadians.¹⁸

Here, finally, was a mandate one could live with. Gone were the patronizing references to correct artistic taste, the long-marginalized RCA, and industrial design. For the first time the Gallery had, as its first obligation, the collection.

In 1989, the government rewarded the National Gallery with funds to support the revitalized mandate. The acquisition budget, frozen at \$1.5 million since 1972 was doubled. No doubt the delivery of a handsome new building ahead of schedule and under budget earned the Gallery credibility

¹⁷ Personal interview with Jennifer Wall, Ottawa, September 13, 1995.

¹⁸ Canada The Museums Act, May 3, 1989.

in the eyes of the government. Such largesse had not been forthcoming since the Liberal government of the 1950s.

The Gallery's corporate plan of January 1992 identifies the main differences between a National Gallery under the NMC and one with the status of a Crown Corporation. Bill C-12

restored to the National Gallery the kind of autonomous position it had been accorded under various Acts of Parliament from 1913 to 1968....strengthens the National Gallery in its traditional role as the federal institution with responsibilities for all aspects of the visual arts....It focuses on the collections by clarifying the National Gallery's primary responsibility to collect works of art and to share them.¹⁹

Within a year of the passage of Bill C-12, a 76-page Collections Policy and Procedures document, written by Gallery staff, followed. It defines how "collecting is to serve the basic legislative objectives of the National Gallery of Canada", and addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the collection, and policies and procedures regarding acquisitions, loans, dispositions, protection, registration and documentation. The Collections Policy identifies approval levels required for purchase and gifts of varying values. For example, the Director can authorize a purchase up to \$50,000, the Acquisitions Committee, for values between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000, and

¹⁹ National Gallery of Canada, Corporate Plan and Operating and Capital Budget, January 31, 1992. p. 4

the Board of Trustees for a purchase price over \$1,000,000. Significantly, no ministerial or Treasury Board approval is required. The objective is to ensure a close scrutiny and wider responsibility-sharing of major acquisitions. With such a system of checks and balances in place, it becomes more difficult for government to find fault with the Gallery's decision-making. In effect, the Director holds considerable power, but ensures that he/she is well-supported in decisions. The policy represents political savvy as much as administrative responsibility on the part of the Gallery.

In the spring of 1990, however, neither Bill C-12 nor the new Collections Policy was formally in place. Only recently under the directorship of Dr. Shirley Thomson, the Gallery reported to government through the NMC and its Director-General John Edwards. A Collections Policy from 1985 identifies the many layers of authority through which purchases over \$1 million had to pass: Director, Board of Trustees, the Visiting Committee, the Minister and Treasury Board.²⁰ The same document identified the Gallery's intention to build on the modest collection of contemporary American art, an activity initiated only in 1967 "in recognition of the decisive international importance that New York City had achieved since

²⁰ National Gallery of Canada, "Collections Policy and Procedures", (hereafter NGC Collection Policy), (Ottawa, 1985), 20.

the end of the Second World War".²¹

On March 7, 1990, the Gallery issued a press release listing major acquisitions of the fiscal year about to end. For the first time, individual purchase prices were listed rather than a lump sum total. Included on this list was Barnett Newman's painting Voice of Fire of 1967, purchased for \$1.76 million. It has been described, rather clinically, by the National Gallery:

It's almost 18 feet high and 8 feet wide. Its form is simple and clear. It consists of three bands of colour which run to the upper and lower edges of the canvas. Each band is 32 inches wide. The red band down the centre was done first and is thickly painted with a number of coats of acrylic. It reflects cadmium-red light very intensely. The red band is flanked by two identically-coloured deep ultramarine-blue bands. They are also painted in acrylic, but more thinly, so that the white ground reflects through a bit, giving them added luminosity with a slightly purplish glow. The blue paint has bled slightly onto the edges of the red. On all three bands the final coat of paint is brushed on directly and fairly evenly, giving the whole painting a sustained intensity of colour and surface.²²

This was not the first time in recent history that the National Gallery had paid a large sum for a single work of art. Indeed, neither Ministers nor Treasury Board had refused 46 submissions for purchase put before them

²¹ NGC Collections Policy, 33.

²² National Gallery of Canada, Voice of Fire, (Ottawa, March 1990), 2.

since 1966.²³ (In 1979, one more timid Minister stalled the approval process so long that the vendor sold the work elsewhere.) As recently as 1987, \$1.23 million was paid for an exquisite little sixteenth-century oil on panel of Madonna and Child by Bernard Van Orley. Unveiled by Communications Minister Marcel Masse, the Van Orley purchase received little publicity, all of it positive.

A fan of boxing, Barnett Newman (1905-1970) would have enjoyed the battle shaping up. Voice of Fire had been on view at the National Gallery since the new building opened in May 1988 without incident. In fact the new building helped to precipitate the purchase, according to the Assistant Director, Collections and Research, Brydon Smith:

Architects think they can lord it over everybody else, including artists and that artists are just there to decorate architecture. I took it as a bit of a challenge. [Architect] Safdie and I were working closely. I thought of works in our own collection that would hold their own in that space and maybe even diminish that architecture a little bit. Voice of Fire popped back into my mind.²⁴

There simply had been inadequate ceiling height in the Lorne Building to

²³ National Gallery of Canada, Curatorial Files, "Background Information to the Treasury Board Submission", July 4, 1989, 1. Of these 46 submissions, 35 required Treasury Board approval.

²⁴ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, Issue No. 8, Tuesday, (Ottawa, April 10, 1990), 8:30.

display Voice of Fire.

In fact there were more important reasons for purchasing Voice of Fire. First, it satisfied an aspect of the Gallery's mandate, to purchase the work of artists who have been influential in changing the course of art and who have affected the practice of art in Canada. Indeed, Barnett Newman exerted a strong, direct influence on Canadian artists as early as 1959 when he led the professional artists' workshop at Emma Lake, in Northern Saskatchewan.²⁵ Many leading Canadian artists, including Ken Lochhead, Art McKay, Ronald Bloore, Douglas Morton, Ted Godwin (the Regina Five) as well as Guido Molinari, Robert Murray, and Yves Gaucher, acknowledge the formative influence of Newman on their work and careers.²⁶

Voice of Fire was commissioned for Buckminster Fuller's American pavilion at the 1967 World's Fair, Expo '67 in Montreal. It is one of a group of only five paintings by Newman which are all about 8 feet by 18 feet, and the only one with a vertical orientation.

²⁵ Anecdote has it that, when contacted in New York about coming to Emma Lake, Newman replied "Who's Emma Lake and where the hell is Saskatchewan?".

²⁶ Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting, (Toronto, 1973), 270-3. Also "Other Voices", symposium at the National Gallery, October 1990.

It order to be easily legible in the vast, open and sunlit space under Fuller's dome, it seems natural that Newman would have oriented his painting so the largest dimension would be the vertical, and that he would have chosen red and blue the two darker colours from his self-imposed and restricted palette at this time of red, yellow and blue.²⁷

The return of Voice of Fire to Canada was a homecoming of sorts.²⁸ The painting represented, therefore, a key moment in Canadian cultural history. The artist's widow, Annalee Newman, acknowledged this in setting and holding the purchase price below a market value estimated at over \$2 million. This compared very favourably to prices paid for other large-scale Newmans in the heated art market of the late 1980s.

Beyond the Canadian connection, Barnett Newman was a leader in the U.S.-based post-war international art movement known as Abstract Expressionism. In a world grappling with the consequences of the atomic bomb, these artists reacted with political cynicism, rejecting the ideologies of the past, facing "the end of ideologies".²⁹ In visual art, the traditional ideals of harmony, beauty and delight and conventions of memory, myth

²⁷ NGC Curatorial files, untitled document by Brydon Smith, (Ottawa, August 26, 1988), 1.

²⁸ This idea is explored in John O'Brien's forthcoming book on Voice of Fire.

²⁹ Denise Leclerc, The Crisis of Abstraction in Canada: the 1950s, (Ottawa, 1992), 37.

and association were discarded as "voluptuous" -- bankrupt modes of expression.³⁰ Abstract Expressionist artists including Newman wrote that their work could well insult "anyone who is spiritually attuned to interior decoration; pictures for the home; pictures for over the mantel..."³¹

Instead, Newman and his colleagues sought to make objects which explored and exposed the physical qualities of their materials -- colour, texture, and form -- celebrating the act of creation itself as an honest and grand undertaking. They gave life to existentialist philosophies by embracing the values of invention, newness and spontaneity in their art, making the "painterly equivalents of states of mind and moods of nature".³²

Along with Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still and a few other American artists working in New York after the Second World War, Newman began painting pictures in which the various parts were not continuously adjusted or modified during the painting process until the artist arrived at a visually balanced or harmonious relationship among the parts within the framing edge, such as one finds in the paintings of Mondrian. Instead, these artists using various means created paintings which confronted the viewer with an overall form or image thereby evoking immediate emotions

³⁰ Benjamin Garrison Paskus, The Theory, Art and Critical Reception of Barnett Newman, Pd.D. thesis, (Chapel Hill, 1974), i., quote from Barnett Newman.

³¹ Paskus, 90.

³² Barbara Stevenson, lecture, Contemporary Canadian Art History, Carleton University, September 14, 1995.

or feelings without the distracting interplay of part to part.³³

The challenges of Abstract Expressionism were too great for many grumpy Canadians in 1990. Brian Mulroney's Conservatives were mid-way through their second term in office. Finance Minister Michael Wilson's budget of February 1990 preached the cost-cutting gospel. Fiscal restraint, government cutbacks, and deficit cutting were the government's stated priorities; the unpopular Goods and Services Tax was being introduced at the same time to augment revenues. Never a fixture in the Canadian psyche, the arts became vulnerable in the face of this so-called renewed fiscal responsibility on the part of government.

Leading up to Voice of Fire, in the fall of 1989 Revenue Minister Otto Jelenik stated publicly that his government would "tamper" with the arm's length relationship. He expressed his agreement with a blatantly homophobic criticism of a Canada Council grant to an acclaimed gay theatre group.³⁴ Despite an outcry from the arts community, neither Jelenik nor the Prime Minister withdrew the remark. The Tories were not positioning themselves as friends of the arts.

³³ NGC Curatorial files, untitled document by Brydon Smith, (Ottawa, August 26, 1988), 2.

³⁴ Pamela Young, "Stripes of Strife", Maclean's, (Toronto, March 26, 1990), 63.

Both Gallery and NMC officials anticipated negative publicity over Voice of Fire. As early as September 1988, Brydon Smith, the curator spearheading the purchase, took a defensive position in a Globe and Mail article:

We expect tough sailing...We are going the full route on this one. Its about (the gallery's) freedom to choose, to defend that choice publicly, and hopefully to have it understood and supported.³⁵

Some dissention over the purchase followed within the ranks of the NMC. In December 1988, Trustee Ramsey M. Withers abstained from the vote on the purchase, citing greater financial need at the Canadian War Museum.³⁶ The remaining Trustees approved the purchase unanimously, in full acknowledgement of "possible negative public reaction".³⁷

The wisdom of the Gallery's public relations strategy, or lack thereof, for Voice of Fire is not the point of this discussion. What is clear, however, is that specific directions to keep the matter quiet came from the highest political sources. In anticipation of the purchase, NMC's Secretary General John Edwards first agreed that a press release should announce

³⁵ John Bentley Mays, "Newman work sought by NGC", Globe and Mail, September 17, 1988.

³⁶ NGC Curatorial Files, Minutes of the NMC Board of Trustees meeting, (Ottawa, December 12, 1988), 6.

³⁷ NGC Curatorial Files, Minutes of the NMC Board of Trustees meeting, (Ottawa, December 12, 1988), 7.

the purchase, then changed his mind.³⁸ Gallery staff implicated in the purchase process have intimated that Minister Masse gave his consent to the purchase on the understanding that there would be no publicity. Unidentified handwriting on a draft resolution concerning the purchase put before the Board of Trustees includes phrases like "some procedure", "no fanfare", "check procedure", and "no publicity".³⁹ This was formalized in a memo of August 1989 to the Gallery's Deputy Director from Wally Kozar, Assistant Secretary-General of the NMC. The message he conveyed was that a strictly passive approach should be taken in terms of contact with the media, that the Gallery should undertake to avoid publicity.⁴⁰ The Gallery would suffer the consequences of this clearly political intervention.

For several possible reasons, the Gallery sought and received exemption from Treasury Board approval for the purchase. As we have seen, Treasury Board approval was required for purchases over \$1 million. A document submitted to Treasury Board in July 1989 requested that this limit be lifted. Ostensibly, the imminent Crown Corporation status of the National Gallery gave weight to the Gallery's request. Bill C-12 had

³⁸ Personal interview with Helen Murphy, Ottawa, August 25, 1995. Draft press release is in NGC Curatorial Files.

³⁹ NGC Curatorial Files, Board of Trustees draft resolution.

⁴⁰ NGC Curatorial Files, Memo from Wally Kozar, Assistant Director-General, NMC to Yves Dagenais, Deputy Director, NGC, (Ottawa, August 7, 1989).

received second reading and all-party support in the House of Commons, when the House arose on June 27, 1989; it was all but law. There was also the risk that funds accumulated over three fiscal years to pay for Voice of Fire would lapse on April 1, 1990, if Bill C-12 was not yet in place.

The Gallery submitted to Treasury Board further reasons for speeding the purchase process: that all proper consultation procedures had been followed, that there was the risk of losing the work to another purchaser in a heated art market, and that the Board of the NMC was in full support of the purchase. This support, the paper argued, would be very important "should any artistic judgement be potentially controversial".⁴¹ While this document was couched in general terms, it is clearly with reference to Voice of Fire. There was no other purchase of this magnitude under negotiation during this period.

Treasury Board approval was given in under a month. No doubt there was goodwill on the part of Treasury Board to forfeit its right to approve the purchase of Voice of Fire. Just as likely, the department which holds the government purse strings did not want to appear to be spending recklessly. If Treasury Board had given its approval, it would be more difficult for the

⁴¹ NGC Curatorial Files, "Background Information to the Treasury Board Submission", July 4, 1989, 2.

2 of/de 2

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

Prime Minister to scold the Gallery. Marcel Masse was ultimately left in a sensitive and vulnerable position, as the only minister having sanctioned the transaction. In a similar vein, it was probable that the government wished to purchase Voice of Fire before the arrival of the novice, Tory-appointed Board of the new Crown Corporation in July 1990. Voice of Fire was a political hot potato that got lobbed around until it landed in the lap of Gallery officials. When the controversy began, support from the NMC Board or the Minister's office was negligible. In political limbo between two mandates, the Gallery was left in a highly vulnerable position.

The purchase of Voice of Fire hit all news media in Canada immediately on March 7, 1990. The content of the story, carried by Canadian Press to the print media, was simplistic and vaguely critical. Within a day or two, Voice of Fire was the subject of editorials, op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, panel discussions, man-in-the-street interviews and call-in radio shows. The tone became more heated. Many journalists threw together their assignments, peppering their commentary with a lot of colourful adjectives and hyperbole condemning Voice of Fire. A few, mostly visual arts journalists, reported more thoughtfully on the purchase. One or two editorialists took the time to consider the grim alternative of Members of Parliament making purchasing decisions for the National Gallery. On the whole, however, the media used Voice of Fire irresponsibly, to demonstrate

solidarity with their audiences on an "easy" issue.

The reasons given by the public for its opposition to Voice of Fire can be reduced to three critical points: "its expensive, its modern and its American". A combination of any two of these points would not have been so problematic; we have seen that expensive, non-Canadian historical works are regularly purchased by the Gallery, as are minor modern and contemporary works. Echoing the "6,000 grain-fed steers" argument of the 1950s, people argued that \$1.8 million was the equivalent of the annual income taxes of 30 to 40 middle-class families, or that \$1.8 million applied against the deficit would save Canada \$180,000 in interest payments, or that \$1.8 million should have been spent on variously women's groups, hungry kids, crumbling universities, medical research and aboriginal newspapers. In fairness, many simply felt they lacked a say in how their tax dollars were spent, and attacked Voice of Fire as a symbol of government's indifference to their interests.

The purchase of a major work from a non-Canadian artist was less problematic, but still thorny. A past Gallery director has suggested that "a touch of anti-Americanism" within the Gallery coloured the Trustees' 1956 decision against collecting contemporary American art.⁴² In 1989 a top

⁴² Boggs, 49.

NMC official voiced his concern in a private meeting that Voice of Fire was by an American.⁴³ The artists' lobby group Canadian Artists' Representation /Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC) took issue with the "priorities" of the National Gallery for devoting such a large portion of the purchase budget. A traditional ally of the Gallery, CARFAC would not position itself as being opposed to Voice of Fire specifically. CARFAC representatives argued loudly but weakly, given that the Gallery's purchase and collection of Canadian art was substantial; they just couldn't resist all the publicity that is rarely visited on a rather marginal special interest group. In one interview, a Gallery curator pulled no punches, accusing CARFAC and others of a xenophobic degree of Canadian chauvinism.⁴⁴

Clearly the fact that \$1.8 million was paid for a non-objective, or abstract painting was the main source of the public's consternation. There was the sense that, because of Voice of Fire's simple composition, the Gallery had not received good value for its money. The cliché "my kid could do that" was voiced repeatedly during the controversy. In fact, satirists from Nepean to Victoria created their own pastiches of Voice of Fire to publicize their opposition and to garner some personal publicity at the

⁴³ Personal interview with Brydon Smith, Ottawa, June 2, 1995.

⁴⁴ Canada AM, CTV, March 9, 1990, (Ottawa: Media Tapes and Transcripts), 2.

same time.

The debate on abstraction however, is at least 100 years old--Abstract Expressionism was a relatively recent movement. Early European modernists like Kandinsky and Malevich, Picasso and Duchamp made the deliberate departure from representation to expand the boundaries of art and to give full expression to their artistic impulses. Decades before Voice of Fire, artists felt that the persistent visual conventions of the Renaissance such as linear perspective and modelling were unnecessarily limiting, and precluded their exploration of other sources of inspiration such as the unconscious, non-Western art, and music.

Abstract art and artists have been more widely accepted in Europe than in North America where technology rather than art informs the "animating vision" of the younger society, closer to a pioneering past.⁴⁵ Touching on the ideas of Nietzsche, George Grant argues convincingly that we live in a post-Christian, technological society, where rationalism reigns. To deal with the ensuing moral chaos, many people have embraced "progress", an ideal which has proven in the late twentieth century to be false and destructive. In their "debased vision of happiness", they ask only for creature comforts and the lowest common denominator of entertainment,

⁴⁵ George Grant, Time as History. (Toronto, 1969), p. 9,34.

while harbouring resentment for their lot.⁴⁶ Creative endeavours, like those by artists, will surely be judged harshly by this majority. Although Voice of Fire is now an historical work of art, it still demands from the viewer a significant level of intellectual rigour and emotional openness. These qualities are not easily forthcoming, according to Grant, from the masses; indeed, little graced the public debate around Voice of Fire.

In a related discussion on culture, Northrop Frye advanced Matthew Arnold's notion that only culture, "the best that has been thought and said", gives people the intellectual, moral and spiritual tools required to flourish. Without the "ideal environment" that culture provides, according to Frye, one can only passively react to circumstances. The debate around literature, like the debate around Voice of Fire, inevitably becomes polarized:

There's something in all of us that wants to drift toward a mob, where we can all say the same thing without having to think about it, because everybody is all alike except people we hate or persecute. Every time we use words, we're either fighting against this tendency or giving in to it. When we fight against it, we're taking the side of genuine and permanent human civilization.⁴⁷

Writing specifically about Voice of Fire, Thierry de Duve addresses the

⁴⁶ Grant, 33,34.

⁴⁷ Northrop Frye, The Educated Imagination, (Toronto, 1963), pp. 66-7.

public's legitimate concern for the purchase price.⁴⁸ He argues that contrary to the standard ideology of the cultural elite, works of art are not priceless; they indeed often and should have high prices. The justification is that all society will benefit from having these works of art, whether they be "the gold of the Incas, Gothic cathedrals or Haida chests decorated with magical motifs". The role of the elites, which he contends will always exist, is to acquire "costly symbols that speak to the work we all do". Barnett Newman always hoped and intended that his work would gain a wide audience.

Pouring oil on the fire, Felix Holtmann, the colourful Member of Parliament (P.C.) for Portage-Interlake and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Culture entered the public debate. Coincidentally, the Gallery had already been invited to make its annual appearance before the committee. Holtmann, who joked that two buckets of paint, two rollers and ten minutes would do the job, said he was summoning the Gallery to account for itself before his committee.⁴⁹ With these and other caustic and inflammatory remarks about Voice of Fire,

⁴⁸ Thierry de Duve, "Vox Ignis Vox Populi", Parachute, (Montreal, October, November, December, 1990), 35-8.

⁴⁹ Since the McGrath Commission of the mid-1980s, parliamentary committees can actively initiate such enquiries, rather than passively accepting only issues referred to them.

Holtmann reaped tremendous personal publicity for a backbencher; his opponents took vengeful delight in referring to him as a pig farmer. The Prime Minister and Cabinet made no apparent effort to silence him.

Only nine days after the National Gallery's announcement of the purchase of Voice of Fire, a spokesperson from Deputy Prime Minister Don Mazankowski's office announced that the powerful Expenditure Review Committee would discuss the possibility of trying to "stop" the purchase. Ministers "don't like the way the money was spent" and "it's a question of the appropriateness of buying this painting" were the reasons given for this review.⁵⁰ Of course, the Treasury Board President who is on the Expenditure Review Committee had full prior knowledge of the purchase of Voice of Fire. The minister responsible, Marcel Masse, was not on the Committee. As no decision emerged from that closed meeting, it is assumed that those present heeded British Lord Melbourne's admonition, "God help a minister who meddles in art!".⁵¹ We will have to wait for the year 2020, when these Cabinet documents are released.

The issue of Voice of Fire came up in the House of Commons, when the

⁵⁰ "Cabinet to review purchase of painting", Toronto Globe and Mail, March 19, 1990.

⁵¹ Matthew Fraser, "Voice of Fire furor: the issue isn't aesthetics, its politics", Montreal Gazette, April 7, 1990.

NDP's culture critic Ian Waddell, asked the Prime Minister if Holtmann's remarks indicated his government's shift away from arm's length. Mulroney replied equivocally, using the highly public forum of Parliament to state his support for arm's length while issuing a caution:

We fully respect and acknowledge the importance of the arm's length relationship. We also hope that those who make the decisions in granting these funds realize that they are not functioning in a vacuum. We hope they will apply their best judgement to an understanding they are dealing themselves with hard-earned tax-payers' money.⁵²

Government's "review" of the purchase was in fact an exercise in stick-waving. At 19% in the polls, the Conservatives had nothing to lose. One columnist's analysis was that yahoo Tory backbenchers had to be thrown a bone because of the government's recent support for bilingualism and a turbaned RCMP.⁵³ The Gallery had conducted itself in an exemplary fashion. No doubt anticipating some unfavourable publicity, extensive consultations about the proposed purchase had been undertaken with academics and museum people across Canada. It was certainly within the authority of the government to fire the Gallery's director; indeed, Mulroney had done exactly that to Timothy Porteous at the Canada Council early in

⁵² Peggy Curran, "It's not your money, PM tells curator as \$1.8-million purchase reviewed", Montreal Gazette, April 7, 1990.

⁵³ Marjorie Nichols, "Art review really just a Tory tactic", Ottawa Citizen, March 20, 1990.

his first mandate. To "undo" a purchase would be an extreme and unprecedented reaction. This did not seem to deter some politicians.

The Parliamentary Committee meeting on April 10, 1990 was wild, ranging from one member asking Gallery officials how a friend of his might sell some paintings in Toronto, through passionate, articulate defenses of the arm's length policy, to outrageous and ill-informed assaults on it. Members tended to follow party allegiances, so the Conservatives did most of the attacking; the NDP members were the most thoughtful and knowledgeable. A motion to review the Gallery's purchasing policy was withdrawn on the grounds that it was inconsistent with the committee's endorsement of arm's length, albeit not unanimously supported.⁵⁴ Still, over a year later one Tory MP on the committee suggested the purchase of Voice of Fire was counter-productive to national unity!⁵⁵

In June 1990, another renegade Tory undertook an even more sinister, but less publicized attack on the Gallery. Chairman of the House of Commons Finance Committee, Don Blenkarn filed a motion for a reduction of \$1.8 million to the Gallery's appropriation for the following fiscal year. With

⁵⁴ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, (April 10, 1990), 8:62.

⁵⁵ "Controversial purchases by National Gallery may hurt unity, MP says", The Ottawa Citizen, October 5, 1991, comments by Geoff Scott, M.P.

only one dissenting voice in place, the budgetary estimates would have to be debated in the House of Commons, rather than passing automatically. For reasons unknown, possibly through an administrative oversight, Blenkarn's notice was not debated and the Gallery's budget was approved intact. Perhaps senior officials had realized that a parliamentary debate on the estimates could do serious damage to the Gallery and chose to back away.

The debate about Voice of Fire continued through the summer of 1990, with lobby groups lining up on either side of the now highly-polarized debate. The wacky libertarian National Citizens' Coalition found the Gallery an easy target. Any other group with a grievance against the government felt free to attack Voice of Fire as a symbol of "Ottawa". The Professional Art Dealers Association of Canada chose to support the Gallery's purchase.

On balance, the Conservative government could have behaved worse. Arm's length was violated in spirit, but not in concrete terms. At the level of Cabinet and above, very little was said, and the veracity of some newspaper accounts of those statements is questionable. Dr. Shirley Thomson is adamant that there was no political interference over Voice of Fire. The fact that backbenchers used the National Gallery as a punching

bag of sorts she dismisses as a necessary part of freedom of expression. Mulroney did not invoke party unity on the issue, she believes, because the Gallery is not a major concern in the daily operation of government.⁵⁶ No doubt this forgiving attitude reflects Thomson's wish to maintain collegial relations between the Gallery and the Canadian government.

Some positive publicity was generated for the Gallery over Voice of Fire, although it was by no means a staged media event as some people suggested. Attendance figures at the Gallery swelled and abstract art was discussed beyond the walls of universities and art museums. On the whole, however, Voice of Fire was a difficult experience for the Gallery, and one which could be expected to be chastening. Real damage to the Gallery might have been done from within its own walls, by means of self-censorship. In 1993, with Voice of Fire still a sensitive issue, the Gallery bravely purchased a large abstract canvas from 1957, No. 16, by the late American artist Mark Rothko, for close to \$1.9 million.⁵⁷ The parallels to Voice of Fire were considerable, but a small controversy over No. 16 quickly passed.

⁵⁶ Personal interview with Dr. Shirley Thomson, Ottawa, September 8, 1995.

⁵⁷ John Bentley Mays, "National Gallery to unveil new acquisitions", Globe and Mail, July 15, 1993.

Unlike the purchase debacle of the 1950s, party politics played only a indirect role in the Voice of Fire controversy. As we have seen, Diefenbaker took direct aim at an institution that was the twentieth-century creation of the Liberal party, headed by a strong Liberal supporter. The workings of the vast bureaucratic machine of the NMC over thirty years helped to minimize the political colour of its museums, although museum directors and the NMC Board were still government appointments. By 1990, the Gallery was largely an unpartisan body, lead by a director who still keeps her political leanings confidential.

Problems with Mulroney's Conservative party arose from the inevitable mixed bag of MPs that come with a majority government; it is not easy to lead backbenchers. Although there is less range in the political spectrum among the traditional political parties, the Conservatives continue to attract candidates and votes from among those who are unsympathetic to public support for the arts. Both Diefenbaker and Mulroney were profound anti-intellectuals. Sad proof that the Gallery is no longer a Liberal institution came in the form of multi-million budget cuts from Jean Chretien's government in early 1995.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ These cuts followed a special Parliamentary vote of \$3 million in 1993/4 to be used for purchases.

Today, Voice of Fire still strikes a chord with Canadians. The fifth anniversary of its purchase was recently recognized by the media and questions about the merit of the painting raised again. A book on Voice of Fire will be published in the coming months. Voice of Fire continues to hang in the National Gallery, and visitors continue to make the pilgrimage to view it. If the purchase of Voice of Fire is to be considered a victory, as the present director believes it is, it must be considered bittersweet.⁵⁹

The National Gallery survived a mean-spirited and unnecessary threat to its independence, finally emerging intact but bruised.

⁵⁹ Personal interview with Dr. Shirley Thomson, September 8, 1995.

CONCLUSION

The collection of the National Gallery is highly visible, material, and enduring, and acquisitions to it have always been controversial. In fact, a single Gallery purchase can provoke more attention than, say, a Canada Council grant to a large performing arts company, although the level of funding may be comparable. A history of controversial acquisitions by the Gallery over 115 years indicate that the debate surrounding art and public funds will not soon go away, nor should we wish that it would. In fact, it could be argued that the most controversial acquisitions have proved to be the most important and enduring, while those uniformly agreed upon have diminished over time.

Government, of course, does not exist to debate the worth of individual works of art to its citizens, nor does it possess the collective expertise to do so intelligently. Wise politicians over the years have recognized the requirement for and adhered to legislation for the removal of their peers from this potentially destructive involvement. As we have seen, however, this has not deterred politicians, both in and out of government, from meddling in the artistic decision making at the Gallery. Opposition members may attack the Gallery as part of larger strategy to attack the party in power; those in government must do so much more responsibly.

Even Sydney Fisher, the last Minister to be directly responsible for National Gallery purchases, saw fit to delegate this duty to a Council of connoisseurs. Fisher was motivated not by benevolence as much as political self-preservation -- a wish to stay out of the inevitable fray surrounding acquisitions.

In the 1950s, the Gallery suffered from administrative immaturity and political naiveté and paid a dear price for it. Forty years later, the Gallery's accountability in matters of finance and administration are amply scrutinized by Treasury Board, the Office of the Auditor General, and finally, by Parliament. In "artistic" matters including acquisitions, a comprehensive system of justification, consultation and peer review ensures decisions are wisely made. The Gallery has fully earned the independence that comes with Crown Corporation status, yet that independence is never fully secure.

Even apparently minor transgressions to arm's length have had unhappy consequences. Alan Jarvis had his say on his run-in with Diefenbaker, but was ultimately ruined by him. Indeed, Jarvis's biography is overdue. No doubt Dr. Thomson will one day have tales to tell about her tenure as Director. Arm's length remains a fragile mechanism, a relationship which requires the respect of those at both end of the "arm" to function as it

should.

We have seen how elected officials, even backbenchers, can wreak havoc on bodies like the National Gallery, for motives often far from the public good. Attacks on the Gallery over the years have been precipitated by party politics, individual personalities, anti-Americanism, homophobia and more. Damage has been inflicted on the collection and the people close to it. The worst losses are those about which we only know very little--the compromises made, the opportunities lost through a lack of courage in the face of political pressure, real or anticipated

Alternatives to arm's length funding for the arts can, in their worst incarnations, spell the end of an authentic culture. The experience at the National Gallery provides vivid examples of exactly how crucial, imperfect and fragile, the dialectic of arm's length remains.

APPENDIX I

Appropriations and Purchases ⁶⁰

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL APPROPRIATION	AMOUNT SPENT ON PURCHASES
1883/4 to 1906/7	average \$1,000-1,500	average \$700
1907/8 to 1913/14	average \$10,000	average \$6,000
1914/15	\$100,000	n/a
1915/16	\$25,000	n/a
1916/17	\$25,000	n/a
1917/18	\$18,000	n/a
1918/9	\$8,000	n/a
1919/20	\$10,000	n/a
1920/1	\$20,000	\$11,866
1921/2	\$40,000	\$21,822
1922/3	\$50,000	\$35,282
1923/4	\$100,000	\$76,995
1924/5	\$75,000	\$54,286
1925/6	\$75,000	\$53,247
1926/7	\$75,000	\$53,987
1927/8	\$100,000	\$74,146
1928/9	\$135,000	\$113,910
1929/30	\$130,000	\$112,301
1930/1	\$130,000	\$102,041
1931/2	\$100,000	\$77,480

⁶⁰ NGC Annual Reports, NMC Annual Reports, 1880-1995, and Boggs, 8.

1932/3	\$39,000	\$25,152
1933/4	\$31,500	\$14,090
1934/5	\$25,000	\$5,217
1935/6	73,470	\$56,324
1936/7	\$75,000	\$52,274
1937/8	\$75,000	\$51,470
1938/9	\$115,000	\$60,990
1939/40	\$115,000	62,297
1940/1	\$45,000	\$6,106
1941/2	\$43,720	\$0
1942/3	\$43,720	\$0
1943/4	\$66,546	\$33,248
1944/5	\$68,330	\$34,236
1945/6	\$102,405	\$34,324
1946/7	\$105,000	\$39,752
1947/8	\$130,718	\$45,700
1948/9	\$181,158	\$59,407
1949/50	\$186,785	\$65,769
1950/1	\$338,954	\$173,253
1951/2	\$295,977	\$111,249
1952/3	\$742,565	\$113,474
1953/4	1,137,849	\$729,252
1954/5	\$588,196	\$268,531
1955/6	\$1,275,830	\$920,371
1956/7	\$445,135	\$273,357
1957/8	\$616,907	\$134,509
1958/9	\$646,433	\$93,171
1959/60	\$739,148	\$27,319

1960/1	\$932,166	\$147,572
1961/2	\$1,099,737	\$193,416
1962/3	\$949,225	\$135,561
1963/4	\$1,148,665	\$322,930
1964/5	\$1,727,811	\$189,820
1965/6	\$2,421,226 **	\$739,680
1966/7	\$2,396,885 **	\$499,505
1967/8	\$3,244,705**	788,453
1968/9 through 1989/90	NMC reports do not give breakdown for NGC	NMC reports do not give breakdown for NGC
1990/91	\$23,180,000	\$1,431,000
1991/2	\$31,306,000	\$5,432,000
1992/3	\$29,764,000	\$3,406,000
1993/4	\$29,648,000	\$2,850,000
1994/5	\$34,368,000	\$1,954,000

* does not include funds carried over from previous fiscal years or revenue from sales, interest, fees, etc.

** includes value of services received from the Secretary of State

APPENDIX II

Chronology

- 1880 - Governor General Lorne founds the National Gallery of Canada and the Royal Canadian Academy
- 1882 - Gallery finds first "permanent" exhibition space
- 1907 - Gallery moves to new building
 - Advisory Council appointed; Sir George Drummond as Chairman
 - first government grants to Gallery
- 1909 - Drummond dies; Byron (Sir Edmund) Walker appointed Chairman of Advisory Arts Council
- 1910 - Eric Brown appointed Curator
- 1911 - Wilfrid Laurier (Lib.) defeated; R.L. Borden (Con.) elected Prime Minister
- 1912 - Eric Brown appointed Director
- 1913 - National Gallery of Canada Act is passed
- 1916 - Centre Block burns down
 - Canadian War Memorials Fund established
- 1919 - CWMF exhibition in London
- 1920 - Group of Seven exhibits together for the first time
- 1921 - Mackenzie King (Lib.) elected Prime Minister
- 1924 - first Wembley exhibition
 - Sir Edmund Walker dies; Dr F. J. Shepherd appointed Chairman
- 1929 - H.S. Southam appointed Chairman of Board of Trustees
- 1930 - R.B. Bennett (Con.) elected Prime Minister
- 1931 - Statute of Westminster is passed
- 1935 - Mackenzie King (Lib.) elected Prime Minister
- 1937 - first exhibition of "Degenerate Art" in Munich
- 1939 - Eric Brown dies; Harry O. McCurry appointed director
- 1941 - Kingston Conference
- 1942 - Canadian War Artists' Committee formed
- 1944 - Turgeon Committee report
- 1945 - Arts Council of Great Britain formed
- 1948 - St Laurent (Lib.) elected Prime Minister
- 1949 - St Laurent appoints Massey Commission
- 1950 - Cleveland Morgan visits Schloss Vaduz
- 1951 - Massey Commission report
 - new Gallery legislation
- 1952 - first Liechtenstein purchases
 - Vincent Massey resigns as Chairman of the Board of Trustees to become Governor General; Charles Fell appointed Chairman

- 1953 - Cabinet commits \$2 million for purchases
- 1954 - Jack Pickersgill replaces Walter Harris as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
- 1955 - Alan Jarvis succeeds Harry O. McCurry as director
- 1956 - Liechtenstein purchases debated in the House of Commons
- 1957 - creation of the Canada Council
 - St Laurent (Lib.) defeated; Diefenbaker (Con.) elected Prime Minister
 - E. Davie Fulton appointed Acting Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
- 1958 - Diefenbaker (Con.) returned with majority government
 - Ellen Fairclough appointed Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
- 1959 - Jarvis, C.P. Fell and Cleveland Morgan resign
- 1960 - new Gallery building opens
- 1963 - Lester Pearson (Lib.) elected Prime Minister
- 1965 - Secretary of State Maurice Lamontagne commissions Sheppard report
- 1966 - Gordon Sheppard report delivered to Secretary of State Judy LaMarsh
- 1967 - Barnett Newman paints Voice of Fire
 - Expo 67 in Montreal
- 1968 - National Museums Act
 - Pierre Trudeau (Lib.) elected Prime Minister
- 1972 - National Museums Policy
- 1982 - Applebaum-Hébert Report
- 1983 - Bill C-24 defeated
- 1984 - Brian Mulroney (Con.) elected Prime Minister
- 1986 - Minister of Communications Marcel Masse commissions Withrow-Richard Report; end of NMC
- 1988 - Mulroney's Conservatives returned to power
- 1989 - Voice of Fire purchased by the Gallery
- 1990 - Gallery announces purchase of Voice of Fire
 - Gallery obtains Crown Corporation status

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Arnold, Matthew. Culture and Anarchy. 1869; reprint. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Barzun, Jacques. The Use and Abuse of Art. Princeton: Princeton University Press Washington, D.C.: the Trustees of the National Gallery of Art, 1974.
- Bell, Michael, and Frances K. Smith. ed. The Kingston Conference Proceedings. 1941; reprint. Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1991.
- Bissell, Claude. The Imperial Canadian: Vincent Massey in Office. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.
- Bissell, Claude. The Massey Report and Canadian Culture. Ottawa: Carleton University Information Office, 1982.
- Boggs, Jean Sutherland. The National Gallery of Canada. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Borduas, Paul-Émile., et al. Total Refusal. Trans. Ray Ellenwood. Toronto: Exile Editions, 1985.
- Brown, F. Maud. Breaking Barriers: Eric Brown and the National Gallery. Ottawa: The Society for Art Publications, 1964.
- Clapp, Jane. Art Censorship: A Chronology of Proscribed and Prescribed Art. Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1972.
- Colgate, William. Canadian Art: Its Origin and Development. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1943.
- Cooper, Andrew Fenton., ed. Canadian Culture: International Dimensions. Waterloo, Ontario: Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism, University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1985.
- Cox, Trenchard. Collecting for a Nation. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, The Queen's Printer, 19 February 1960.

Davies, Robertson. What's Bred in the Bone. Toronto: Macmillan, 1985.

Dorland, Michael. "A Thoroughly Hidden Country: Ressentiment, Canadian Nationalism, Canadian Culture." In Sightlines: Reading Contemporary Canadian Art. Ed. Jessica Bradley and Lesley Johnstone. Montreal: Artexes editions, 1994, pp. 40-65.

Fetherling, Douglas., ed. Documents in Canadian Art. Peterborough, Ontario: broadview press, 1987.

Frey, Bruno S., and Werner W. Pommerehne. Muses and Markets: Explorations in the Economics of the Arts. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Frye, Northrop. Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture. Toronto: Anansi Press, 1982.

Frye, Northrop. The Educated Imagination. Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1963.

Glazebrook, G.P. de T. Sir Edmund Walker. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Grant, George. Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism. 1965; reprint. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988.

Grant, George. Time as History. Toronto: CBC, 1969; reprint. 1974.

Harper, J. Russell. Painting in Canada: a history. second edition, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977.

Heick, Wilf H. History and Myth: Arthur Lower and the Making of Canadian Nationalism. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975.

Jarvis, Alan., ed. Douglas Duncan: A Memorial Portrait. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.

Leclerc, Denise. The Crisis of Abstraction in Canada: the 1950s. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992.

Lehmann-Haupt, Hellmut. Art Under a Dictatorship. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Lewis, Justin. Art, Culture and Enterprise: The politics of art and the cultural industries. London: Routledge, 1990.

Litt, Paul. The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

Massey, Vincent. On Being Canadian. London, Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1948.

Mellen, Peter. The Group of Seven. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970.

Mitchell, J.M. International Cultural Relations. London: Alien & Unwin, 1986.

Pick, John. The Arts in a State. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1988.

Ostry, Bernard. The Cultural Connection: An essay on Culture and Government Policy in Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978.

Reid, Dennis. A Concise History of Canadian Painting. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Reid, Dennis. Our Own Country Canada: Being an Account of the National Aspirations of the Principal Landscape Artists in Montreal and Toronto 1860-1890. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, National Museums of Canada, 1979.

Rosenberg, Harold. Barnett Newman. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1978.

Tippett, Maria. Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.

Tippett, Maria. Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Woodcock, George. Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in Canada. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985.

Vergo, Peter. The New Museology. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1989.

Government Documents

Canada. An Act respecting museums. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1989.

Canada. An Act respecting the National Gallery of Canada. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1951.

Canada. An Act to incorporate the National Gallery of Canada. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1913.

Canada. An Act respecting the National Museums. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968.

Canada. Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, (Applebaum-Hébert), Summary of Briefs and Hearings, 1982.

Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture. April 10, 1990.

Canada. Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science. 1949-51 (Massey Commission). Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951.

Canada. Royal Commission Studies, A Selection of Essays Prepared for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951.

Dominion of Canada. Official Report of Debates of the House of Commons. 1920-1930.

National Gallery of Canada. Annual Bulletins. Ottawa: 1969-1989.

National Gallery of Canada. Annual Reports. Ottawa: 1880-1968, 1990-1995.

National Gallery of Canada. Archives. Boxes 3-12 and 1.11-L.

National Gallery of Canada. Collections Policy and Procedures. National Museums of Canada: Ottawa, 1985.

National Gallery of Canada. Collections Policy and Procedures. Ottawa: 1991.

National Gallery of Canada. Curatorial Files.

National Gallery of Canada. Library, Clipping Files.

National Gallery of Canada. Medium-Term Plan. 1985/6 to 1987/8, Ottawa: 16 March 1984.

National Gallery of Canada. Submission to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. Ottawa: 1949.

National Gallery of Canada. Ten Decades of Service. Ottawa: National Museums Canada, 1979.

National Gallery of Canada. To Found a National Gallery: The Royal Canadian Academy of Arts 1880-1913. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980.

Sheppard, Gordon. A Special Report on the Cultural Policy and Activities of the Government of Canada. May 1966.

Exhibition Catalogues

Barron, Stephanie. ed., "Degenerate Art": The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991.

Canadian War Records Office. Canadian War Memorials Exhibition. 1919.

Hill, Charles C. The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1995.

Nasgaard, Roald. The Mystic North: Symbolist Landscape Paintings in Northern Europe and North America 1890-1940. Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Art Gallery of Ontario, 1984.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Liechtenstein: The Princely Collections, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985.

Articles and Dissertations

Bell, Michael. "Museums and Federal Cultural Policy." Queen's Quarterly, 94/3 (Autumn 1987), pp. 552-571.

De Duve, Thierry. "Vox Ignis Vox Populi." Parachute (October, November, December 1990), pp. 35-8.

Constable, W.G. "Report on the National Gallery of Canada." June 20, 1931.

Constable, W.G. "Report on the National Gallery of Canada." April 20, 1956.

Fulford, Robert. "Divine Comedies." Saturday Night, Volume 100, Number 10, October 1985, pp. 5-10.

Hubbard, R.H. "The Early Years of the National Gallery of Canada." Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Fourth Series, Volume III, Section II, 1965, pp. 121-129.

Jarvis, Alan. "Art Means Business." The Military College of Canada Review, Volume XXXVIII, 1957, pp. 145-153.

Jasen, Patricia. "Arnoldian Humanism, English Studies, and the Canadian University." Queen's Quarterly, 95/3, Autumn 1988, pp. 550-566.

Litt, Paul. "The Massey Commission, Americanization, and Canadian Cultural Nationalism." Queen's Quarterly, Vol. 98, Summer 1991, No. 2, pp. 375-387.

Paskus, Benjamin Garrison. "The Theory, Art and Critical Reception of Barnett Newman." Diss. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1974.

Postman, Neil, "Museum as Dialogue." Museum News, September/October 1990, pp. 55-58.

Yaffe, Phyllis C. "Barnett Newman's Voice of Fire: The Politics of Art Acquisition." Queen's Quarterly, 98/4, Winter 1991, pp. 874-891.

Interview, Conferences and Lectures

Hicks, Michael, retired Treasury Board official. Telephone interview. Ottawa, June 6, 1995.

Russell, Bruce Hugh. "Reconsidering Douglas Duncan." National Gallery of Canada. June 27, 1994.

Small, Helen, retired Treasury Board official. Personal interview. Ottawa, June 12, 1995.

Smith, Brydon, Curator, Twentieth Century Art, NGC. Personal interview. Ottawa, June 2, 1995.

Murphy, Helen, Assistant Director, Communications and Marketing, NGC. Personal interview. Ottawa, August 25, 1995.

"Other Voices." symposium on Barnett Newman. NGC. led by Serge Guibault, Robert Murray, John O'Brien, and Brydon Smith. October 1990.

"The Things We See." Ed. Elspeth Chisolm, Host Jim Mitchell. CBC Tuesday Night. CBC Radio Archives. September 16, 1975.

Thomson, Dr. Shirley, Director, NGC. Personal interview. September 8, 1995.

Wall, Jennifer, Head, Audit and Evaluation, NGC. Personal interview. Ottawa, September 13, 1995.

END

0|4-06-9|6

FIN