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# **Guiding the Ship Through the Storm: W. D. Herridge and Canadian Relations with the United States, 1931-1935**

by

**Stephen Hoogenraad, B.A.**

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

**Department of History  
Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario  
August 2000**

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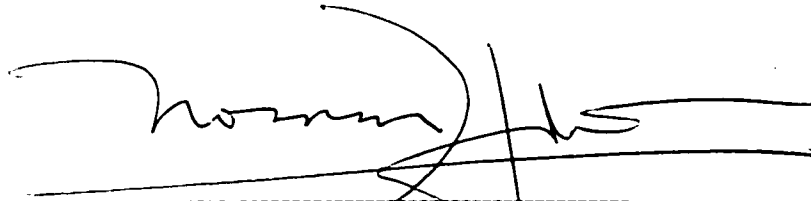
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Thesis Supervisor



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Chair, Department of History

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18 September 2000

## ABSTRACT

As personal advisor to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett and chief Canadian diplomat to the United States, William Duncan Herridge was a force in Canadian politics from 1931 to 1935. Herridge and Bennett, by some accounts, met only in 1930, and it is remarkable that Herridge was able to gain the Conservative leader's confidence in such a short time. This friendship grew as Herridge became more involved in Depression politics and diplomacy, and then married Bennett's sister. While Minister to Washington, Herridge was preoccupied with three main issues: the St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty, Reciprocity, and the New Deal. This thesis describes and examines these issues in detail from the standpoint of Herridge's involvement, in an effort to assess the nature of his role and influence. At the heart of the enquiry is a paradox. Herridge is regarded in the literature as a spectacularly successful envoy and advisor. However, none of his three large objectives can be regarded in his own terms as a success.

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## INTRODUCTION

As personal advisor to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett and chief Canadian diplomat to the United States, William Duncan Herridge was a force in Canadian politics from 1931 to 1935. Herridge and Bennett, by some accounts, met only in 1930, and it is remarkable that Herridge was able to gain the Conservative leader's confidence in such a short time. This friendship grew as Herridge became more involved in Depression politics and diplomacy, and then married Bennett's sister. While Minister to Washington, Herridge was preoccupied with three main issues: the St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty, Reciprocity, and the New Deal. This thesis describes and examines these issues in detail from the standpoint of Herridge's involvement, in an effort to assess the nature of his role and influence. At the heart of the enquiry is a paradox. Herridge is regarded in the literature as a spectacularly successful envoy and advisor.<sup>1</sup> However, none of his three large objectives can be regarded in his own terms as a success.

William Duncan Herridge was born in Ottawa on September 18, 1888, the son of Dr. William Thomas Herridge, who was for thirty years the minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian church in Ottawa. W.D. Herridge came from a long line of religious men, including both his maternal and paternal grandfathers, the latter well known in the Established Church of Scotland and the former considered a leader of the Methodist Church in Canada. It is likely that his father's evangelicalism and legacy of reform heavily influenced Herridge. He certainly modeled his oratory on that of his father, and participation in church functions prepared him for the public life he came to lead.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, Robert Bothwell, John English, and Ian Drummond, Canada: 1900-1945, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 296.

Herridge grew up in Ottawa and then went to the University of Toronto where he was a classmate of the aristocratic Vincent Massey,<sup>2</sup> who preceded him as Minister to Washington. Herridge hurt his back playing Varsity football and was laid up for two years, but still managed to graduate in 1909.<sup>3</sup> The future Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King attended St. Andrew's church and was a frequent guest of Herridge's parents. King was their neighbour at Kingsmere, in the Gatineau Hills of Quebec, where the Herridges owned a house near King's cottage. There are hints in King's diary of impropriety between King and Herridge's mother Marjorie,<sup>4</sup> but it was probably mostly a friendship. Herridge for years considered King an older brother. It is likely that King was responsible for Herridge joining his fraternity, Kappa Alpha, at the University of Toronto.<sup>5</sup>

Herridge successfully attended Osgoode Hall, becoming a lawyer, but his plans were soon interrupted by events over which he had no control. As law school ended, Herridge found himself volunteering to go to war in much the same way as thousands of other young Canadians did. The First World War had broken out in Europe. Herridge entered an officers' training course in Toronto in November 1914. He secured his commission and paid his own way to England "under the delusion that he had better hurry if he wanted to reach France before everything was over."<sup>6</sup> He reached France in

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<sup>2</sup>Claude Bissell, *The Young Vincent Massey*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) p. 200. Their friendship ended abruptly in 1931 with Herridge's appointment to Washington. It was Massey who ended the friendship despite Herridge's efforts.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Vining, *Bigwigs: Canadians Wise and Otherwise*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1935), p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> C. P. Stacey, *A Very Double Life: The Private World of Mackenzie King*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 92-95.

<sup>5</sup> Stacey, *A Very Double Life*, p. 97. Stacey found references to this in letters Herridge wrote to King between 1907 and 1911 in the King Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Vining, p. 71.

1915 as a cavalryman, and was transferred a month later to the cycle corps of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. By August of 1916 (having recovered from a case of gastro-enteritis)<sup>7</sup> he was an Intelligence Officer with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade and a staff officer with the rank of acting Captain.<sup>8</sup> On the battlefields of France he distinguished himself, winning the Distinguished Service Order and the Military Cross with bar.<sup>9</sup> He also received two mentions in despatches.<sup>10</sup> Able to rally his fellow soldiers when there was no one else who could,<sup>11</sup> Herridge had an instinct for assuming leadership in times of crisis. He ended the war as a brigade-major.

He was married to Helen Rose Fleck, a childhood friend, on November 21, 1916 at the Briar Walk Presbyterian Church in Putney, England.<sup>12</sup> She was the granddaughter of the millionaire Ottawa industrialist J. R. Booth. By November of 1917, Herridge was worn out by thirty-three months of continuous service in France.<sup>13</sup> Since the battle of Passchendaele, according to one of his doctors, he had “felt fagged, and unequal to his work – has difficulty concentrating on his work and requires a long rest.”<sup>14</sup> He was given three months leave to recover. When he was finally demobilized on the twentieth of April, 1919,<sup>15</sup> Herridge returned to Ottawa and joined a law practice, specializing in patent and corporate law,<sup>16</sup> making friends with many international and American businessmen over the course of his early career. He also founded the Canadian League,

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<sup>7</sup> National Archives of Canada, Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), Attestation Papers, RG 150.

<sup>8</sup> CEF, Attestation Papers, RG 150.

<sup>9</sup> *New York Times*, Sept. 23, 1961. Herridge's obituary. He died at the age of 73.

<sup>10</sup> Vining, p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with W.R. Herridge, June 30, 2000. His father was decorated for his leadership skills.

<sup>12</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, November 23, 1916.

<sup>13</sup> CEF, Attestation Papers, RG 150. Medical Report on a Disabled Officer.

<sup>14</sup> CEF, Attestation Papers, RG 150. Medical Report on a Disabled Officer.

<sup>15</sup> CEF, Attestation Papers, RG 150. CEF Certificate of Service.

<sup>16</sup> His offices were at 56 Sparks Street. Roosevelt Library, Henry Agard Wallace Papers General Correspondence, Herridge, W. file.

an organisation of Canadian veterans of the war,<sup>17</sup> formed in collaboration with Viscount Byng, who had been Herridge's commander in France. The members assembled in various Canadian cities to talk about national topics.<sup>18</sup> This activity was interrupted by the death of his wife on March 18, 1925 in Montreal at the Royal Victoria Hospital.<sup>19</sup> Her funeral was very well attended by the likes of Sir Arthur Currie and Mackenzie King.<sup>20</sup> The couple had no children and he was the recipient of a considerable fortune.

Rose's death had a considerable psychological effect on Herridge. He withdrew from society, spending the winter in his home in Sandy Hill and the summer at his cottage in the Gatineau Hills, where he enjoyed reading, fishing, and cutting trees.<sup>21</sup> Herridge at any rate tended to the reclusive for most of his life, struggling to overcome this affliction, as a man in public life must. His wife's death convinced him at this point to give up the Canadian League.<sup>22</sup>

Herridge had become a close friend of and greatly admired Viscount Byng, who was Governor General of Canada from 1921 to 1926. It was his friendship with Byng that set Herridge on a course separate from that of his mentor as a youth, Mackenzie King. Herridge had generally been considered a Liberal up until the constitutional crisis of 1925-1926, also known as the King-Byng affair, when King turned the role and

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<sup>17</sup> See Rose Potvin's *Passion and Conviction: The Letters of Graham Spry*, (Regina: University of Regina Press, 1992), p. 77. Potvin makes the mistake of equating the Canadian League with the Canadian League of Nations Society, a different organisation. Herridge was the honorary Secretary of the Canadian League. David Bercuson in *True Patriot: The Life of Brooke Claxton, 1898-1960*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 63, wrote that Herridge was a leader in the Canadian League movement.

<sup>18</sup> Frank W. Peers, *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, 1920-1951*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 65.

<sup>19</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, March 21, 1925.

<sup>20</sup> William Lyon Mackenzie King Diary, March 21, 1925.

<sup>21</sup> Queen's University Archives, Grant Dexter Papers, Subject File on Herridge, W. D., folder 187, box 20.

<sup>22</sup> The Canadian League has not been thoroughly examined and is largely unknown. Historian Sandra Gwyn described it as a quasi-fascist organization, but this seems a bit far-fetched. Brooke Claxton took

behaviour of the Governor General into an election issue. Herridge was incensed at King's treatment of Byng and never forgave King. Byng's biographer Jeffrey Williams described Herridge as a "brilliant advocate who had broken with Mackenzie King over the constitutional crisis and later became a close advisor to R.B. Bennett."<sup>23</sup> Herridge was no longer a Liberal when he encountered R.B. Bennett, who was elected leader of the Conservative party in 1927, succeeding Arthur Meighen.

No one knows quite when that first encounter occurred. According to one account, the two were on a train from Ottawa to Montreal in early 1930 to attend the funeral of the Quebec lawyer Eugène Lafleur. The well-connected journalist Grant Dexter recorded that "Bennett was deeply impressed by the ability of the young patent attorney, strongly attracted by his personality."<sup>24</sup> Herridge was full of schemes which appealed to Bennett, who thought that the young man had "splendid constructive ideas."<sup>25</sup> Thus, as this version would have it, the meeting was accidental, the impact immediate.

The recollection of Rod Finlayson, one of Bennett's closest aides, is rather different. Finlayson wrote that Mildred Bennett, R.B.'s younger sister, had told General A. D. McRae, who was chief organizer of the Conservative campaign, that she knew a good man to accompany Bennett on the campaign trail for the federal election of 1930. This was Herridge,<sup>26</sup> who may have already been dating Mildred.<sup>27</sup>

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over leadership of the League after Herridge's withdrawal. Sandra Gwyn, Tapestry of War: A Private View of Canadians in the Great War, (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 489.

<sup>23</sup> Jeffrey Williams, Byng of Vimy: General and Governor General, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 331.

<sup>24</sup> Grant Dexter Papers, Subject File on Herridge, W. D., folder 187, box 20.

<sup>25</sup> Hector Charlesworth, I'm Telling You: Being the Further Candid Chronicles of Hector Charlesworth, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1937), p. 44.

<sup>26</sup> R. K. Finlayson, "Life with R.B.: That Man Bennett," Unpublished manuscript edited by J. R. H. Wilbur. R. K. Finlayson Papers. p. 268.

<sup>27</sup> King Diary. Saturday April 11, 1932.

As the campaign began, Bennett and Herridge, accompanied by Mildred, crossed the country by train with Bennett giving a rousing speech at every stop. The three traveled over fourteen thousand miles, crossing the country twice.<sup>28</sup> It was Herridge who wrote Bennett's speeches during the campaign and coined the phrase "blast a way into world markets"<sup>29</sup> as a call to ever higher tariffs to protect Canadian industries and force foreigners to buckle under the pressure. Herridge also devised Bennett's pledge to "end unemployment or perish in the attempt."<sup>30</sup> Both promises violated Bennett's instincts, but seem to have proved effective in the campaign. Bennett told Grattan O'Leary, editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, that "he had never promised to end unemployment. Mr. Herridge had done that for him by issuing a text of a speech with that phrase included in it. Also he said, it was Herridge who had put the phrase - I'll blast my way into foreign markets, into his Winnipeg keynote speech. Herridge had put it in; Bennett had struck it out. Herridge had the page retyped without Bennett's knowledge with the phrase back in. When delivering the speech Bennett referred to his manuscript, found the phrase and was unable to get by it."<sup>31</sup> King's promise not to give a "five cent piece" to a provincial Conservative government for unemployment relief gave Herridge another strong piece of ammunition for Bennett's speeches. Herridge's attacks on the Liberals met with considerable success.

Bennett and the Conservatives engineered a stunning victory in the 1930 election and King was reduced to opposition. Bill Herridge quickly emerged as Bennett's closest advisor in government. As political lobbyist Graham Spry wrote, Herridge's alliance

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<sup>28</sup> J. H. Thompson with Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), p. 201. It was the first July election since 1872.

<sup>29</sup> Larry A. Glassford, *Reaction and Reform: The Politics of the Conservative Party Under R. B. Bennett, 1927-1938*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 81. The "Blast a way into world markets.." speech was published in the Conservative owned publication *The Canadian*, on June 13, 1930.

<sup>30</sup> National Archives of Canada, Dafoe Papers, Grant Dexter to J.W. Dafoe, January 4, 1935.

with Bennett “offered him scope for his fertile impatient mind and energies.”<sup>32</sup> After the election, Arthur Currie, the much-praised Canadian World War I general, wrote to Byng that:

I have not seen Bill for the last ten weeks but he has toured the country continuously with Bennett and I am sure has given him a great deal of help. The first thing we know old Bill will be the power behind the throne! Mackenzie King has only himself to blame for the deviation of Bill’s allegiance to him, because up to the time of King’s differences with you, Bill was his stout supporter. In fact I am quite certain that tens of thousands of men voted against King in this election because it was their first opportunity of expressing their opinion of his actions in 1926.<sup>33</sup>

Barely containing his glow of victory, Bennett left for the Imperial Conference of 1930 that took place in October. Herridge went to London as the Prime Minister’s chief advisor,<sup>34</sup> while O.D. Skelton, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, did not accompany him to the Conference. Bennett was skeptical of Skelton’s loyalty since he had been recruited by King and worked closely with him for years. Bennett’s reliance on Herridge’s advice in external affairs remained a theme of his administration. Herridge was also his personal advisor in his first trip to Washington to meet with President Hoover in January of 1931. Herridge had no official position and therefore was not accountable to anyone in the External Affairs bureaucracy other than its Secretary of State, Bennett; John Hilliker has written in the official history of the Department of External Affairs that Herridge could not “serve as a link between Bennett and the

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<sup>31</sup> Dafoe Papers, Grant Dexter to J.W. Dafoe, January 4, 1935.

<sup>32</sup> Potvin, p. 78. This was quoted from Spry’s writing of “Radio Broadcasting and the Art of Lobbying.”

<sup>33</sup> Williams, p. 352. Quoted from a letter from Currie to Byng, 15 August 1930, Currie Papers, National Archives.

<sup>34</sup> C. P. Stacey, Canada in the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, volume 2: 1921-1948: The Mackenzie King Era, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 129. He wrote that “At the head of the list, where Skelton’s name might have stood, was that of the Prime Minister’s Personal Assistant, W. D. Herridge.”

officials concerned with the results of the visit.”<sup>35</sup> Indeed, both before and during his tenure as Minister, Herridge was allowed a wider berth in his actions than a member of the external affairs department would have had. This was mainly the result of the fact that, as political scientist James Eayrs has written, Bennett retained “a jealous hold upon the External Affairs portfolio and conducted foreign policy possessively, even stealthily.” That has had a historiographical impact, as Eayrs adds: “few of [Bennett’s] colleagues and subordinates have been able to throw strong light upon shadowy though crucial episodes.”<sup>36</sup>

Herridge was perhaps responsible for Bennett’s hostile attitude towards the British at the Imperial Conferences of 1930 in London and the Imperial Economic Conference of 1932 in Ottawa. He was interested in keeping the closest possible relations with the United States, often in contradiction to Bennett’s tendency to look for inspiration and leadership from Britain.<sup>37</sup> Herridge was very adept on a personal level at cultivating lasting relationships with important Americans. These links with members of official Washington became lasting friendships, which Herridge maintained during the course of his life.

At the time of the visit by Herridge and Bennett to Washington in 1931, there were rumours that Herridge would be the next minister to the United States.<sup>38</sup> He was

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<sup>35</sup> John Hilliker, *Canada’s Department of External Affairs, vol. 1, The Early Years, 1909-1946*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), p. 139.

<sup>36</sup> Hugh L. Keenleyside *et al*, *The Growth of Canadian Policies in External Affairs*, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1960), pp. 59-60.

<sup>37</sup> Norman Hillmer and J. L. Granatstein, *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990s*, (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994), p. 113.

<sup>38</sup> *New York Times*. Sunday 1 February 1931. p. 5. The rumours were rife as a result of the Associated Press’ coverage of the ‘summit’. See Richard Kottman’s ‘The Hoover-Bennett Meeting of 1931: Mismanaged Summitry,’ in the *Annals of Iowa*, vol. XLII (Winter 1974).



appointed just after that trip, on March 7, 1931, at a salary of \$12 000 per annum.<sup>39</sup>

Herridge required “some months” to get his legal practice in order since he was acting as counsel in several Privy Council appeals.<sup>40</sup> His departure for Washington itself was delayed for personal reasons, including his marriage to Mildred Bennett, R. B. Bennett’s younger sister.

Their engagement was announced on April 2, 1931 in the Ottawa papers, and the next day in the *New York Times*.<sup>41</sup> At a dinner the night before the wedding, Mildred told Mackenzie King that she and Herridge had been practically engaged the summer before during the election campaign.<sup>42</sup> They were married in Ottawa on April 14, 1931. After the wedding, crowds lining the streets around Chalmers United Church cheered the newlyweds.<sup>43</sup> The Governor General, the Earl of Bessborough, toasted the bride at the reception which was held at the Chateau Laurier Hotel.<sup>44</sup> Bennett received congratulations by cable from U.S. President Hoover and even from the King. It was a major social event, described by the *Toronto Daily Star*, as being of “world-wide interest, as well as one of the most important [weddings] ever solemnized in our Dominion.”<sup>45</sup> The newlyweds left by train from Ottawa to New York, where they boarded the *Europa* departing for England and Europe.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> National Archives of Canada, Public Service Commission, RG 32 110, 1888.09.18. Taken from Herridge’s file. Aug. 10, 1931 Minute of the Committee of the Privy Council. P.C. 1879.

<sup>40</sup> *New York Times*. Monday 9 March 1931. p. 2. Bennett made this statement to the press.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*. ‘Mildred Bennett Engaged to Marry.’ 3 April 1931. p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> King Diary. Saturday April 11, 1932.

<sup>43</sup> *New York Times*. ‘Miss Bennett Wed to Major Herridge.’ 15 April 1931. p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> King Diary. Tuesday April 14, 1931.

<sup>45</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, April 14, 1931.

<sup>46</sup> See the *Toronto Daily Star*, April 14, 1931. The cousin of Herridge’s first wife, Lois Booth, had married Prince Erik of Denmark in 1924. Rose Herridge had been the maid of honour. Herridge and Mildred visited the royal couple in Copenhagen during their honeymoon. See ‘Wedding was *the* place to be.’ *Ottawa Citizen*, February 11, 1999 and ‘Ottawa Girl to become Princess when Wedding Bells Ring Out at All Saints’ Church this Afternoon.’ *Ottawa Journal* Monday February 11, 1924.

The newly-appointed minister to Washington was now the Prime Minister's brother-in-law, and inevitably, there was comment about favouritism. Herridge's appointment did not sit well with many Tory politicians who did not know him.<sup>47</sup> They certainly cannot have been pleased when Herridge's name was mentioned as a possible future leader of the Conservative Party.<sup>48</sup> Yet Grant Dexter wrote that it was clear that "he accepted the appointment against his own wishes," and that Herridge's "ambitions lead to the Gatineau Hills, not to Washington."<sup>49</sup> The newsman also questioned the logic of sending one's best friend out of the country: that could not be much of a reward for either Bennett or Herridge. Nor was Dexter the only commentator to make the point that Herridge was a man of ability, not ambition.<sup>50</sup>

The Department of External Affairs was not part of the appointment process. Norman Hillmer, the biographer of O.D. Skelton, wrote that the head of External Affairs "got along well with Herridge and told Bennett it was a good appointment. He had not been consulted in advance, but no one else was either."<sup>51</sup> Other members of the department were less happy. "When the major diplomatic posts went to wealthy ex-politicians such as the Ambassador to Japan, Herbert Marler, or prime-ministerial brothers-in-law such as W. D. Herridge, the career men became understandably bitter."<sup>52</sup> This was how Lester Pearson reacted, and Hugh Keenleyside shared this feeling from

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<sup>47</sup> Leading Conservative Cabinet members tried to circumvent Herridge on Canadian-American issues while he was in Washington. Herridge fought back, and was able to win the day. See Charlesworth, p. 55.

<sup>48</sup> E. Austin Weir, The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), p. 136.

<sup>49</sup> Grant Dexter Papers. Subject File on Herridge, W. D., folder 187, box 20. Queen's University Archives.

<sup>50</sup> Vining, p. 73.

<sup>51</sup> Norman Hillmer, 'Strictly Skeltonian Principles,' unpublished manuscript chapter. Cited from Skelton's Diary, Feb. 14, 1931.

<sup>52</sup> John English, Shadow of Heaven. The Life of Lester Pearson Volume One: 1897-1948, (London: Vintage U.K., 1990), p. 189.

Japan. However, Keenleyside realistically admitted “the Department had barely enough trained or partly trained officials to attend to the most essential responsibilities.”<sup>53</sup>

The Herridge couple did not make it to Washington until June. Hoover awaited Bill Herridge eagerly. He and the State Department expected negotiations to begin on a Seaway Treaty immediately upon the Minister’s arrival,<sup>54</sup> and that was at the top of the President’s Canadian-American agenda. In fact, months passed before anything was accomplished.

Herridge’s reputation as Minister among historians is solid, if sketchy. Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English wrote that: “There was W.D. Herridge, Bennett’s brother-in-law, who was sent as minister to Washington between 1930 and 1935; much to everyone’s surprise, Herridge was a smashing success in the American capital, where he became the confidant of first the Hoover and then the Roosevelt administrations.”<sup>55</sup> The historiography suggests that W.D. Herridge, a reclusive man, was somehow the most dynamic of diplomats - fiery, opinionated, dominating, and impeccably connected. He has been described by C. P. Stacey as erratic, brilliant, and as having a “genius for forceful, and unorthodox, diplomacy.”<sup>56</sup> Yet Herridge remains a murky figure in the literature of Canadian history and Canadian-American relations. Most accounts of the Bennett era mention Herridge simply in passing, as the powerful brother-in-law in Washington. The focus is on Bennett, and Herridge is simply a pleasingly convenient part of the background, but one with an extraordinary and

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<sup>53</sup> F. H. Soward, ‘The Department of External Affairs and Canadian Autonomy, 1899-1939,’ (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association Booklets, No. 7, 1972), p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> *New York Times*. ‘St. Lawrence Plan to Come up Again.’ June 18, 1931. p. 17.

<sup>55</sup> Bothwell *et al*, p. 296.

<sup>56</sup> Stacey, *Canada in the Age of Conflict*, p. 125.

unexplained influence on the Prime Minister. Analysis of the Herridge role, important though he is acknowledged to be, ends before it begins.<sup>57</sup>

The closest to a full account of W. D. Herridge's political career is a thesis written by Mary Hallett in 1964 for Queen's University. Her thesis concentrates on Herridge's political activities as leader of New Democracy, a movement essentially created to unite the forces of reform in Canada, in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Herridge was attracted to an elitist form of democracy, and to powerful leadership, of the kind he observed in Franklin D. Roosevelt's Washington. Hallett believed that Herridge formed his own party as a result of the Conservative Party's unwillingness to embrace his policies to reform the capitalist system.<sup>58</sup> New Democracy was an attempt to create a party out of the many ineffectual dissident parties that dotted the political landscape. Hallett pointed out that, when she wrote in 1964, there were no secondary sources directly on the subject. That is still true today. The main drawback of Hallett's work is its lack of analysis of the period which Herridge spent in Washington. She gives some details on Herridge's earlier life in order to explain how he came to start his own political party, but his origins, drive and rationale remain largely unexplained.

Historians ascribe a good deal of Herridge's influence to his marriage to Mildred Bennett. Every historian describing events that Herridge was involved in after his arrival in Washington points out that he was the Prime Minister's brother-in-law. Some historians, indeed, make the mistake of saying that he was Bennett's brother-in-law

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<sup>57</sup> For example, Michael David Swift, "R.B. Bennett and the Depression, 1930-35," (University of New Brunswick: M. A. Thesis, Spring 1964), and J. R. H. Wilbur, The Bennett New Deal: Fraud or Portent? (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1969).

<sup>58</sup> Mary Hallett, "W.D. Herridge and The New Democracy Movement," (Queen's University: M. A. Thesis, April 1964), p. i.

before 1931. There is no doubt that his privileged family position gave Herridge unrivalled access to Bennett, but there is much more to the Bennett-Herridge equation than that. They were both confrontationalists, gamblers, men of aggression, and Herridge was very good at supplying precisely the kind of political advice and ammunition which Bennett appreciated.

Many efforts to describe the Bennett-Herridge term in office are negative in tone. In a study of Conservative Party leadership, M. Ann Capling depicts the Prime Minister as a leader who alienated his own party as well as the Canadian people. The title of Capling's chapter about Bennett, "A Nasty Tone,"<sup>59</sup> suggests her views on his government. Capling contends intriguingly that Herridge was viewed jealously by Conservative Party notables and was sent to Washington to avoid a ministerial revolt in Bennett's cabinet while keeping Herridge well within reach.<sup>60</sup> The argument is given weight by Herridge's frequent visits to Ottawa to advise Bennett. Capling then ignores Herridge until 1935, when he proposed that Bennett make radio speeches offering a Canadian New Deal.<sup>61</sup> Capling characterizes the Prime Minister as a failure because of his flawed and erratic personality. The impression given is that Herridge was much the same.

Some recent theses and books concerning Bennett have been much more forgiving, suggesting *inter alia* that he was an agent of reform. Kurt Peacock's recent thesis, "Red Tory", shows Bennett to be a reformer who was willing to summon the

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<sup>59</sup> M. Ann Capling, "Political Leadership in Opposition: The Conservative Party of Canada, 1920-1948," (University of Toronto: Ph.D. Thesis, 1991), p. 59.

<sup>60</sup> Capling, p. 83.

<sup>61</sup> Capling, p. 100.

power of the state to solve Canada's problems during the Depression.<sup>62</sup> Peacock claims that Herridge was a source of many of Bennett's initiatives in state action.<sup>63</sup> Historian Larry Glassford's book, Reaction and Reform, a sympathetic study of the Conservative Party under Bennett, constructs a reaction-reform dynamic with Herridge influential on the reform side of the agenda.

One of Bennett's early biographers, Ernest Watkins, wrote that Herridge's influence on Bennett deepened over the years he was in Washington, and "it was at its zenith when Bennett came to formulate his own policies for Canada in the fall of 1934 and the spring of 1935."<sup>64</sup> Watkins had no doubt that Herridge crucially influenced Bennett.

In The Loner, P.B. Waite's Joanne Goodman Lectures, Herridge is portrayed in a positive light as someone who could say what he thought regardless of Bennett's reaction.<sup>65</sup> Bennett listened, got angry, and then forgave Herridge on numerous occasions. H. Blair Neatby, in the third volume of the King biography, points out that Herridge urged Bennett to initiate trade talks with the United States.<sup>66</sup> He further explains that Herridge was the source of the suggestion for the New Deal broadcasts.<sup>67</sup> It was Herridge who realized the important psychological dimension of the American New Deal and its potential for impact in Canada. The government in Ottawa had to take the

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<sup>62</sup> Kurt Peacock, "Red Tory: The Political Ideas and Legislative Legacy of R.B. Bennett," (Carleton University: M. A. Thesis, 1999), p. 165.

<sup>63</sup> Peacock, p. 167.

<sup>64</sup> Ernest Watkins, R. B. Bennett, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1963), p. 178.

<sup>65</sup> P. B. Waite, The Loner: Three Sketches of the Personal Life and Ideas of R. B. Bennett, 1870-1947 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 62.

<sup>66</sup> H. Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Prism of Unity, 1932-1939, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 83.

<sup>67</sup> Neatby, p. 85.

initiative to restore prosperity, and this was the idea Herridge urged upon Bennett with substantial success.<sup>68</sup> Neatby gives more insight into Herridge's role with Bennett than any of the other historical biographies, probably because his analysis of Bennett is so detailed.

Rod Finlayson, Bennett's personal assistant, wrote his memoirs and filled them with recollections of his friendship with Herridge and Bennett. He certainly saw Herridge as a major influence on Bennett.<sup>69</sup> Finlayson's memoir, never published, is thus the best source of material on the relationship between Herridge and Bennett. Even here, however, Herridge is so completely in Bennett's shadow that his importance is impossible to gauge.

Other relevant studies include John Swettenham's biography of General Andrew McNaughton. He argues that Herridge was a visionary of the same ilk as his subject. "In 1916, when commanding the 11th Artillery Brigade on the Kemmel front, McNaughton had come to know the staff captain of Macdonnell's 7th Infantry Brigade--W.D. Herridge. This man, courageous and intelligent, was one of a group of young Canadians who were already thinking about what was best to do for Canada after the war."<sup>70</sup> Herridge and McNaughton's friendship survived the war. They enjoyed going into the Gatineau Hills to Herridge's cottage. Swettenham wrote that the "two cooked their own meals, tramped through the hills, and talked; or there would be larger groups drawn from rising young Canadians. They often met at each others' homes in Ottawa."<sup>71</sup> It would

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<sup>68</sup> Neatby, p. 86.

<sup>69</sup> Finlayson, p. 268.

<sup>70</sup> John Swettenham, McNaughton, vol. 1, 1887-1939, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 199.

<sup>71</sup> Swettenham, p. 199.

appear that these informal meetings became a habit for Herridge. He held similar meetings, in the form of luncheons, at the Legation in Washington throughout his stay there.

Grattan O'Leary, a longtime editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, has valuable insights about Herridge in his memoirs. He describes Herridge as a radical who wanted to visit China in the early thirties with Henry Wallace, President Roosevelt's left-minded Secretary of Agriculture. O'Leary also mentions that Bennett could relax with Herridge. Herridge was a person who got to the point and avoided bureaucracy, and he also supplied Bennett with ideological thrust.<sup>72</sup>

There are also diplomatic biographies and memoirs that convey information helping to piece together the puzzle.<sup>73</sup> J.L. Granatstein, in his biography of Norman Robertson, put Herridge right at the center of efforts to secure a reciprocity deal with the United States. He argued that Herridge was as much, if not more, a man of action than Bennett was.<sup>74</sup> In his memoirs, Lester B. Pearson described Herridge as a highly effective and successful Canadian representative in the United States. He also mentions that Herridge was often more progressive than conservative.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Grattan O'Leary, Grattan O'Leary: Recollections of People, Press, and Politics, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), p. 74-78.

<sup>73</sup> Note that Peter Oliver, Howard Ferguson's biographer, in his discussions of Bennett's politics and diplomacy, ignored Herridge completely, despite Ferguson's role as the High Commissioner in London at the time that Herridge was in Washington. Peter Oliver, G. Howard Ferguson: Ontario Tory, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

<sup>74</sup> J. L. Granatstein, A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft 1929-68, (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981), p. 49.

<sup>75</sup> Lester B. Pearson, Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Volume 1: 1897-1948, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 75.



The major works on Canadian-American relations in the Depression are by Richard N. Kottman. He wrote the book Reciprocity and the North Atlantic Triangle,<sup>76</sup> and several related articles.<sup>77</sup> But Kottman has remarkably little time for Herridge. This occurs even when Herridge is the key actor in an event. Kottman works from an American viewpoint, concentrating on the United States actors.

The main reason for the paucity of studies of the Conservative government of the Depression is perhaps that it was very unpopular by the time it left office, stamped with the stigma of failure. Losers can often be very unappealing. Historian Michael Bliss wrote, "the Prime Minister became a symbol of, perhaps a scapegoat for, all the sins of capitalism and capitalists throughout the land."<sup>78</sup> Those who worked with him are also inheritors of this unpopularity.

This thesis is based primarily on documents from the National Archives of Canada. Prominent among them are the Bennett papers on microfilm and the records of the Department of External Affairs. The papers of Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, as well as the records of the U.S. State Department in Washington, were valuable. The Queen's University Archives in Kingston contain the papers of Grant Dexter, a prominent political journalist for the *Winnipeg Free Press*. W.D. Herridge's papers, held in private hands in Toronto, were

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<sup>76</sup> Richard N. Kottman, Reciprocity and the North Atlantic Triangle, 1932-1938, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968).

<sup>77</sup> Richard N. Kottman, 'The Canadian-American Trade Agreement of 1935,' Journal of American History vol. LII, Sept. 1965, 'Herbert Hoover and the Smoot-Hawley Tariff: Canada, A Case Study,' Journal of American History vol. 62, no. 3, Dec. 1975, 'Herbert Hoover and the St. Lawrence Seaway Treaty of 1932,' New York History vol. 56, no. 3, 1975.

<sup>78</sup> Michael Bliss, Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Mulroney, (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994), p. 113.

also consulted, as were the printed documents in Documents on Canadian External Relations and Foreign Relations of the United States.

The three main initiatives that Herridge concentrated on while in Washington will constitute the main chapters of this thesis. The first chapter will give the background on the St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty and the details of Herridge's involvement in the negotiations of the Treaty. The second chapter will focus on Herridge's role in the drive for reciprocity with the United States. The third chapter will describe Herridge's part in the drafting of the 'Bennett New Deal.'

Herridge's politics and his policies were the result of the Depression and could not have existed separate from it. The St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty, reciprocity, and the Canadian New Deal were all motivated by his desire to alleviate the suffering caused by unemployment in Canada.<sup>79</sup> They were also shaped by Herridge's confrontational style and personality and by his conception of politics as an endeavour not suited to compromise. Herridge saw himself as co-captain of the ship of state, and he told Bennett that their job "was to guide the ship as best we might through the storm."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> National Archives of Canada, McNaughton Papers, vol. 105, Herridge to McNaughton, February 1, 1934. Herridge told McNaughton that they had but one problem: "that is to put the unemployed to work."

<sup>80</sup> J. R. H. Wilbur, 'H. H. Stevens and R. B. Bennett, 1930-34,' Canadian Historical Review vol. XLIII, no. 1, March 1962, p. 9. Cited from Bennett Papers, vol. F-244, Herridge to Bennett, January 16, 1934. Herridge informed Finlayson that he had "a place on the bridge". McNaughton Papers, vol. 105, Herridge to Finlayson, September 18, 1935.

## I. THE ST. LAWRENCE DEEP WATERWAY TREATY

Herridge's role in the St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty has been all but ignored by historians, but the Treaty itself has been given some attention, usually from an American perspective. Historian Kenneth Hilton, in his articles on the Seaway scheme, does not even mention Herridge; as an American scholar, he is far more interested in the battle between different interest groups in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Mabee<sup>2</sup> and Willoughby<sup>3</sup> provide good accounts of the negotiations of the early 1930s that eventually culminated in the 1932 St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty, but their coverage of Herridge's role is slight in comparison to the attention given to the American notables. The accounts of the Seaway written by Canadians, for the most part, concentrate on a later period of Canadian history, a period that saw the fruition of years of negotiations and planning.<sup>4</sup>

There is, moreover, little in the way of documents outlining the progression of the treaty negotiations. Historian C. P. Stacey wrote: "the implication seems to be that at this early stage in his administration Bennett, mistrusting Skelton and the Department of External Affairs, was conducting the whole business himself, assisted no doubt by Herridge, and was keeping the record in his head."<sup>5</sup>

The St. Lawrence Deep Waterway seemed to be an ideal public works project to help carry North America out of the Great Depression by providing jobs and economic benefits from an outlet to the Atlantic for Great Lakes commerce and especially prairie

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Hilton, 'New York State's Response to St. Lawrence Seaway Support in the 1920s,' Inland Seas vol. 37, no. 3, Fall 1981, pp. 15-20.

<sup>2</sup> Carleton Mabee, The Seaway Story, (New York: Macmillan, 1961).

<sup>3</sup> William R. Willoughby, The St. Lawrence Seaway: A Study in Politics and Diplomacy, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961).

<sup>4</sup> See Lionel Chevrier, The St. Lawrence Seaway, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959), and Jennifer Sussman, The St. Lawrence Seaway: History and Analysis of a Joint Water Highway, (Montreal: C. D. Howe Research Institute, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> C. P. Stacey, Canada in the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, volume 2: 1921-1948: The Mackenzie King Era, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 146. In an endnote Stacey mentions that there was virtually nothing in DCER, 5, this reflecting the poverty of the official files.

wheat. There was a long history of interest in an outlet to the Atlantic. Governments in the United States and Canada had built canals of various depths for over a century to surmount the obstacles of the St. Lawrence River to navigation.<sup>6</sup>

The first task Herridge carried out upon being named Minister to the United States was to acquaint himself with the history of the St. Lawrence issue. Prime Minister Mackenzie King had considered the idea on several occasions over the years, but he had delayed any negotiations by seeking further studies. There were some solid reasons for this delay and they seem to have been best summarized by an American, William Phillips, the first American Minister to Ottawa. Taking up his position on June 1, 1927, the aristocratic Phillips had a very good understanding of Canada and a solid relationship with Canadians and their government. Roughly three and a half months after arriving in Ottawa, he reported to Secretary of State Kellogg with a list of six Canadian objections to the Seaway:

1) such an agreement with the United States would sacrifice Canadian sovereign rights over the St. Lawrence; 2) special interests in the United States wanted cheap power from the St. Lawrence; 3) the Americans must agree to restrictions on the Chicago drainage scheme; 4) Canada's political autonomy would be undermined; 5) the scheme would not be supported in the Conservative-controlled Canadian Senate even if the government were to go ahead; and, finally, 6) the St. Lawrence is Canada's most valuable asset, and she should drive a hard bargain by demanding significant U.S. tariff reductions in return for Canadian cooperation on the Seaway project.<sup>7</sup>

Phillips also mentioned that Canada "always suffered in Canadian-U.S. negotiations."<sup>8</sup>

Numerous analyses made it one of the most studied waterways in the world.<sup>9</sup> Both governments had spent much time and money studying the river during the first three

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<sup>6</sup> See George Washington Stephens, The St. Lawrence Waterway Project: The Story of the St. Lawrence River as an International Highway for Water-borne Commerce, (Montreal: Louis Carrier and co., 1930). He gives a good analysis of all previous navigation works in relation to the proposed St. Lawrence Deep Waterway. He especially gives a good account of the Chicago Diversion and the controversy surrounding it.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon T. Stewart, The American Response to Canada since 1776, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), p. 138. William Phillips to Secretary of State Kellogg, Ottawa, 27 September 1927, SDDF 1910-1929, Box 2, RG 59, National Archives of the United States.

<sup>8</sup> Stewart, p. 138. William Phillips to Secretary of State Kellogg, Ottawa, 27 September 1927, SDDF 1910-1929, Box 2, RG 59, National Archives of the United States.

<sup>9</sup> See for instance, Harold G. Moulton *et al.*, The St. Lawrence Navigation and Power Project, (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1929).

decades of the twentieth century. The Americans, however, were more interested in developing the St. Lawrence than King and the Liberals. In 1929, Republican Herbert Hoover became President of the United States. As Secretary of Commerce from 1921 to 1928, he had been the Chairman of the St. Lawrence Waterway Commission. This Commission made several recommendations to President Coolidge, including the approval of a scheme to build a deep waterway in conjunction with the Canadians.<sup>10</sup> The reticence of King made this project impossible.<sup>11</sup> Hoover, however, did not forget about the Commission or its findings, and when he became President he pushed for negotiations.

The St. Lawrence Seaway was one of the planks on Bennett's campaign platform in 1930. This was a very popular issue in the West, where another route to the Atlantic would be welcome in breaking the grip of the two great Canadian railways, the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific. It was estimated that the shortening of the overland route would save precious cents for the stricken wheat farmers of the Depression-bound prairies in an already depressed world market. The Seaway was a very important issue for certain members of Bennett's entourage, Herridge not the least. Bennett's executive secretary, Rod Finlayson believed that he owed his position in the Prime Minister's office to a series of articles he had written for the *Winnipeg Free Press* on the benefits and drawbacks of a Seaway in 1929 and 1930. He noted: "Herridge was appointed Minister to Washington early in 1931 and from the day on which he presented his credentials to the United States government, he devoted nearly all of his time to the business of making the St. Lawrence Seaway Treaty."<sup>12</sup>

Herridge had had a very informative tutor on the St. Lawrence, the prominent General A. G. L. McNaughton. Rod Finlayson recalls in his memoirs:

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<sup>10</sup> Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency, 1920-1933*, (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 122.

<sup>11</sup> See Canada, Department of External Affairs, *St. Lawrence Waterway Project*, (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1928).

<sup>12</sup> R. K. Finlayson, "Life with R.B.: That Man Bennett." Unpublished manuscript edited by J. R. H. Wilbur. R. K. Finlayson Papers, p. 86.

A. G. L. McNaughton, always an authority on navigable waters, had, in his career as a public servant, served no less than six administrations. For some years prior to the election of 1930, he had been accustomed over week-ends to roam about Harrington Lake with W. D. Herridge and John Thompson. Wholly unsuspecting at the time of the part Herridge was to play in the making of the Seaway Treaty, McNaughton was constantly briefing him on the feasibility of the Seaway as a joint power and navigation project.<sup>13</sup>

McNaughton and Herridge were fast friends. They spent many long hours discussing Canada's problems and its position in the world. McNaughton's experience with the St. Lawrence question had begun with a study of the issue, to which he devoted several years under the administration of Mackenzie King. Herridge and McNaughton often left Ottawa and went to Herridge's cottage in the Gatineau Hills.<sup>14</sup> Ideas seemed to materialize when Herridge met with his contemporaries, and prior understanding of the St. Lawrence issue gave Herridge a strong advantage in the negotiations.

There was not, however, a marked enthusiasm for a St. Lawrence Deep Waterway in Canada. Most of the incentive for the construction, as we have noted, came from the prairies where farmers could use a cheap outlet for their grain. Canada's two national railways were amassing huge debts and major losses as the trains ran at low capacity during the Depression. They could not understand why any new competition was needed when they were going bankrupt. The Montreal Board of Trade studied the issue and concluded that the existing canals were underutilized and with very little expenditure could be greatly improved. The St. Lawrence was an "unnecessary uneconomic project."<sup>15</sup>

The Welland Canal, on the other hand, was nearly completed, linking Lake Erie with Lake Ontario at massive expense. That canal was deep enough for most ocean going ships, but there were none of these on the Great Lakes. The Welland Canal needed an outlet to the sea, a powerful incentive for a St. Lawrence Deep Waterway.

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<sup>13</sup> Finlayson, p. 85.

<sup>14</sup> John Swettenham, McNaughton, vol. 1, 1887-1939, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968), p. 199.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Holgate and J.A. Jamieson, St. Lawrence Waterway Project, (Montreal: Montreal Board of Trade, 1929), p. 4.

Hanford MacNider, Hoover's choice for American Minister to Canada, was a crucial player in the St. Lawrence issue.<sup>16</sup> MacNider told Herridge that "[the waterway] is one of his [Hoover's] pet projects . . . his whole attitude toward Canadian affairs hinges upon it."<sup>17</sup> In dealing with King, Hoover had early on decided that, without the Seaway, he had to do something for the American prairie farmers. The Smoot-Hawley tariff, signed in the summer of 1930 by Hoover, to the extreme detriment of Canadian farm production, was put in place because King refused the options given by Hoover for Seaway development. Unless there was a Seaway agreement, Bennett could likely expect more tariffs in the spirit of Smoot-Hawley.

As soon as Bennett became Prime Minister, the Americans clamoured for a treaty. MacNider asked "whether the Canadian Government now finds itself in a position to appoint commissioners to discuss jointly with commissioners of the United States the details of the Seaway, and to formulate a treaty appropriate to the purpose."<sup>18</sup> Hoover was very disappointed that Bennett did not act at once. The Americans wanted to begin as soon as possible. The spread of unemployment and social unrest, the prospect of setting thousands of idle labourers to work on an undertaking of such great national importance was particularly appealing.<sup>19</sup> In January 1931 Bennett and Herridge traveled to Washington for talks with Hoover. During the course of the conversations, the President urged the immediate appointment of commissioners to negotiate a treaty. Bennett replied that a number of vexing Canadian-American problems made it "extremely difficult" for him to proceed with treaty negotiations. Among these problems were recent American restrictions on Canadian citizens crossing the border in Detroit and other American cities; the use of

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<sup>16</sup> Richard N. Kottman, 'Herbert Hoover and the St. Lawrence Seaway Treaty of 1932,' New York History vol. 56, no. 3, 1975, p. 315.

<sup>17</sup> Richard N. Kottman, 'Herbert Hoover and the Smoot-Hawley Tariff: Canada, A Case Study,' Journal of American History vol. 62, no. 3, December 1975, p. 620. Cited from Hanford MacNider to Herridge, May 9, 1931, Hanford MacNider Papers. (Herbert Hoover Library, West Branch Iowa).

<sup>18</sup> Willoughby, p. 133. Cited from Acting Sec. of State to MacNider, Aug. 26, 1930, see Foreign Relations, 1930, I, p. 532.

<sup>19</sup> Willoughby, p. 133.

compulsion by the Coast Guard in enforcing American prohibition laws; and the failure of the American Senate to approve certain conventions of special concern to Canada.<sup>20</sup> Hoover's disappointment was palpable.

In April of 1931, before he arrived in Washington, Herridge told Bennett that he wished to negotiate a Seaway treaty with the United States. And he wanted to do it alone, without commissioners.

I do not see the purpose in surrendering the normal functions of the Department to an extra governmental body whose zeal might only complicate the situation, and whose prominence in the public eye would be sure to give various aspects of the matter, undesirable publicity.<sup>21</sup>

Herridge would be answerable to Bennett and no one else. This was the Herridge *modus operandi*.

Preliminary discussions were started in July of 1931; two weeks after Herridge had assumed his post. In October 1931, the Prime Minister officially consented to open treaty negotiations. He decided to do so, Bennett told Parliament afterward, because of the conjunction of two circumstances, the completion of the new Welland Canal and the deepening of the Hudson River for ocean-going ships up to Albany.<sup>22</sup> Knowing that the negotiations were going to cause a stir in Canada, Bennett was especially eloquent. "Did it ever occur to honourable members," he asked, "that there are occasions in the lives of nations as of individuals when decisions have to be made or the opportunity is gone forever?"<sup>23</sup>

Negotiations began immediately. Prior to Bennett's decision, Herridge had spent days commuting between Washington and Ottawa working out a strategy with the Prime Minister.<sup>24</sup> This was to be a familiar feature of Herridge's time in Washington; he returned

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<sup>20</sup> Willoughby, p. 134. See memo dated January 31, 1931, by Theodore Marriner of a conversation with MacNider, Dept. of State File 611.616/187.

<sup>21</sup> National Archives of Canada, Bennett Papers. Herridge to Bennett, 8 April 1931. Reel M1467, p. 510665-66.

<sup>22</sup> Mabee, p. 97.

<sup>23</sup> Mabee, p. 98. quoted from House of Commons, Debates, 1932, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> *New York Times*. 'A Canadian Colonel House.' July 12, 1931. p. 2.



to Ottawa often to speak with Bennett.<sup>25</sup> According to Dean Acheson, one of the well-placed New Dealers who was close to the Minister, Herridge put enormous effort and creativity into the St. Lawrence treaty.<sup>26</sup>

Herridge worked in close consultation with General McNaughton, the Canadian expert on the subject and his close friend. McNaughton prepared a first draft of the treaty on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1931. It was corrected the next day.<sup>27</sup> Herridge and McNaughton met on the 3<sup>rd</sup> in McNaughton's Ottawa office, where they talked about unemployment relief, aid to civil power, and the state of politics in Canada and the U. S. A. But they concentrated on the second draft of the treaty,<sup>28</sup> agreeing that the document as drafted was in line with their ideas and developing a line of attack against the American negotiator. Herridge took away a copy of the draft treaty and a summary of the costs of works related to the project that McNaughton had prepared. Their demands were steep.<sup>29</sup> Herridge began negotiations knowing exactly what to ask for from the Americans. He could not have been better prepared.

One of Herridge's problems with the negotiations for the St. Lawrence Treaty was the division of powers between the states and the federal government in the United States. The real problem was New York State Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt wanted an agreement between New York and the U.S. Federal government for the allocation of the power rights from the proposed hydro developments on the St. Lawrence. Roosevelt

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<sup>25</sup> Even though he was Minister to Washington, Herridge spent a great deal of time in Ottawa with Bennett. See Rose Potvin, Passion and Conviction: The Letters of Graham Spry, (Regina: University of Regina Press, 1992), p. 78. Graham Spry wrote that as Minister to Washington, Herridge was a frequent visitor to Ottawa even before there was an established air service.

<sup>26</sup> Mary E. Hallett, "W. D. Herridge and the New Democracy Movement," (Queen's University: M. A. Thesis, April, 1964), p. 7n. This was according to Dean Acheson, interviewed by Hallett on Nov. 26, 1963.

<sup>27</sup> Swettenham, p. 208n. Cited from Memorandum, 2 July, 1931. "Miscellaneous letters and memos for sorting and disposal," McNaughton Papers.

<sup>28</sup> Swettenham, p. 208n. Cited from Memorandum, 2 July, 1931. "Miscellaneous letters and memos for sorting and disposal," McNaughton Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Swettenham, p. 208n. Cited from Memorandum, 2 July, 1931. "Miscellaneous letters and memos for sorting and disposal," McNaughton Papers.

wrote to Hoover on July 9, 1932, that it was important to solve the remaining question. "It is a vital necessity for the simple fact that this great project involves two objectives of equal importance and cannot in public justice accomplish one without the other. I am deeply interested in the immediate construction of the deep water way as well as in the development of abundant and cheap power."<sup>30</sup> Roosevelt wanted an agreement on the power rights before any treaty was signed, but Hoover replied that the negotiations had been underway for nearly three years. He insisted: "While under our Constitution international treaties fall within the sole jurisdiction of the Federal Government, nevertheless the representatives appointed by you and leaders in other states primarily concerned have been consulted during the course of the negotiations."<sup>31</sup> Hoover seemed to brush Roosevelt's concerns aside by rejecting a power deal in advance and rather smugly responding that "I am glad to know that it will meet with your support."<sup>32</sup> This turned out to be the beginning of a serious problem for supporters of a Seaway. Hoover ended up proposing a meeting of concerned governors later to discuss an equitable parceling out of the power. Stimson, the Secretary of State under Hoover, felt that Roosevelt was trying "to play politics about it", during an election campaign for President where he and Hoover were rivals. Stimson was worried about what Roosevelt could do to hold up the treaty and afraid Hoover would further alienate him.<sup>33</sup> There was also a determined group of Roosevelt supporters who were not interested in the development of the St. Lawrence. Ports on the Atlantic and railway interests in the United States did not want competition from inland ports or shipping from the Great Lakes.

Herridge was aware of formidable obstacles to the project in Canada. The government of Ontario had to be consulted since most of the work would be done there.

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<sup>30</sup> Timothy Walsh and Dwight M. Miller eds., Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Documentary History, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 46. Roosevelt to Hoover, July 9, 1932.

<sup>31</sup> Walsh and Miller, p. 48. Hoover to Roosevelt, July 10, 1932.

<sup>32</sup> Walsh and Miller, p. 48. Hoover to Roosevelt, July 10, 1932.

<sup>33</sup> Walsh and Miller, p. 49. Stimson Diary, July 10, 1932.

There was also the question of who would pay for what and who would control the hydro-electric rights to the project. Bennett's deal with Ontario was for Canada to pay for navigation works, Ontario Hydro to cover the hydro works, and the two to share equally the cost of works which would benefit both.<sup>34</sup> With the Conservatives of Premier George Stewart Henry in power at the provincial level, Ontario and the federal government reached that agreement on July 11, 1932.<sup>35</sup> A more formidable opponent was Premier Louis-Alexandre Taschereau of Quebec. It would be primarily Quebec ports that would be bypassed by a St. Lawrence Seaway, and Montreal would lose its place as the furthest inland port for ocean-going vessels. Private hydro-electric interests exerted pressure against the hydro aspects of the project, which would be controlled by Ontario. Taschereau called the Seaway "a national crime for Canada."<sup>36</sup> The *Ottawa Citizen* expressed its disgust with Taschereau, saying: "Unless Canada is to be forever held back by provincialism, a halt must someday be called to this disintegrating influence on national unity. Special privilege may seem to be strongly entrenched behind Premier Taschereau, but there is a definite limit to this pushing of sectional interests against the nation's interests."<sup>37</sup> Taschereau eventually overplayed the Quebec hand and was forced to back down.

Another argument against undertaking such a large project was Canada's huge debt. It was in the range of three billion dollars in the early 1930s and steadily getting bigger as the Depression worsened. Opponents declared the construction of a Seaway to be "an act of supreme folly." It would add an additional three or four hundred million dollars to the

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<sup>34</sup> Canada, Treaties, Canada-Ontario St. Lawrence Agreement, (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1932).

<sup>35</sup> Willoughby, p. 144. Cited from *White Paper, Agreement....concerning the development of power in the International Rapids Section of the St. Lawrence River* (Ottawa, 1932).

<sup>36</sup> Mabee, p. 99. Cited from the *Montreal Gazette*, July 15, 1932.

<sup>37</sup> Willoughby, p. 140. Press comment summarized in *Dispatch 755*, Riggs to Stimson, April 8, 1932, Dept. of State File 842.9111/73.

debt and could not be “completed in sufficient time to alleviate the economic distress of the Prairie farmers.”<sup>38</sup>

Politically, the jobs the construction would create seemed to outweigh all these problems. Herridge certainly thought so. In the House of Commons, the Liberals argued that the existing St. Lawrence canals were being used to only fifty percent of their capacity and the waterways were carrying a constantly declining proportion of the country’s total traffic.<sup>39</sup> Yet this was one of the reasons for creating a link to the sea. Opening up the St. Lawrence to deep-sea shipping would provide endless possibilities.

There were fears that the United States would take advantage of Canada. Under the title “Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts,”<sup>40</sup> the *Montreal Gazette* warned that the assumption by Canada’s neighbours of the principal construction costs would inevitably lead to serious complications, since “whatever the United States pays for the United States will own, and what it owns it will control.” Resentment of recent acts by the United States also fueled opposition. The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, the refusal of the American Senate to ratify the Niagara Falls Convention of 1929, and the failure of the government in Washington to halt Chicago’s excessive diversion of water from Lake Michigan were a few examples of issues bothering Canadians at a time of difficult Canadian-American relations.

Formal negotiations on the St. Lawrence Treaty began in October 1931. The treaty itself was complex and depended on actions by both governments. On November 14, 1931, Herridge had an ‘exchange of views’ with Secretary of State Stimson. A joint board of engineers was authorized to go to work, and its report, dated April 9, 1932, formed a basis for a treaty.<sup>41</sup> They agreed on a two-stage development of the International Rapids Section with a dam at Chrysler Island. The estimate of the total cost for the seaway was \$543 429

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<sup>38</sup> Willoughby, p. 135. See for example Frederick George Scott, of Quebec, in a letter dated Nov. 23, 1931, to the *New York Times*, Nov. 29, 1931, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Willoughby, p. 135. From Hermas Deslauriers, House of Commons *Debates*, May 14, 1930, p. 2071.

<sup>40</sup> *Montreal Gazette*. Oct. 10, 1931. Cited in Willoughby, William R. p. 136.

<sup>41</sup> Stacey, *Canada in the Age of Conflict*, p. 147.

000. Of this, \$272 453 000 was to be paid by the United States and \$270 976 000 by Canada.<sup>42</sup> The draft that McNaughton and Herridge had discussed earlier in the year was visible in the final treaty. Its provisions reflected the fact that it was the United States rather than Canada that had pressed for it. While the United States had advocated a twenty-five-foot waterway, the treaty provided, as Canada had wished, for a twenty-seven-foot waterway.<sup>43</sup> The treaty made the United States responsible for completing the work from Lake Superior to Lake Erie, Canada for completing the work on the Canadian section of the St. Lawrence, and both nations responsible jointly for the work on the international section of the river. Total costs, including the cost of work already done for the Seaway, such as the Welland Canal, would be shared by the two countries equally. Nearly all the costs of construction in the international section were to be paid for by the United States, but on the Canadian side of this section, in order to reduce unemployment in Canada, the work was to be done with Canadian labour, engineers, and materials.

Although both the Hoover administration and the New York Power Authority had come to favour one power dam in the international section, Herridge won out with a cheaper plan for two power dams, one at Chrysler Island and one at Barnhart Island. Canada was also granted the right to share in the control of the water levels of all the Great Lakes. This meant that any diversion of water from Lake Michigan into the Mississippi system at Chicago was to be put under joint Canadian-American control.<sup>44</sup> The St. Lawrence Deep Waterway was to run from the head of the Great Lakes to Montreal.

Neither country had obtained all that it had asked for. Herridge had given way on his earlier demand that Canada be allowed credit for money spent on dredging the channel between Montreal and the sea and for the construction of the 14-foot canals around the St.

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<sup>42</sup> C. Frank Keyser, The St. Lawrence Seaway Project: A Brief Historical Background, (Washington: The Library of Congress Legislative Reference Service: Bulletin No. 58, 1947), p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> The advantages of either a 25, 27, or even a 30-foot waterway are studied in Harold G. Moulton *et al.*, The St. Lawrence Navigation and Power Project, (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1929), pp. 35-51.

<sup>44</sup> Canada, Treaties, St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty, (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1933), p. 6.

Lawrence rapids. Herridge had also abandoned his request that the power of the Canadian section of the river be developed ahead of that in the International Rapids section.<sup>45</sup> The United States gave up its idea of one huge power dam and agreed to the international control of the diversion of water from Lake Michigan. "The treaty, in short, was based on the democratic principle of give-and-take,"<sup>46</sup> concludes political scientist William Willoughby, author of the authoritative study of the treaty. Even Mackenzie King called the treaty "a fairly good bargain for Canada."<sup>47</sup> The biggest hurdle was that of ratification by the United States Senate.

The ten article St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty was signed in Washington by Herridge and Stimson, on July 18, 1932,<sup>48</sup> two days after the adjournment of the United States Congress. President Hoover said: "the Treaty represents to me the redemption of a promise which I made to the people of the Midwest."<sup>49</sup> But Committee consideration was postponed until after the presidential election, scheduled for November, and the delay gave the opposition a chance to consolidate. Hoover's treaty would not be discussed during his Presidency.

When the U.S. Senate assembled on December 6, 1932, the Treaty was submitted to the Senate.<sup>50</sup> In December 1932, Hoover was still President. Roosevelt was President-elect. Herridge encountered Roosevelt in a short meeting on February 21, 1933, in New York, just before Roosevelt's inauguration as President. Characteristically, Roosevelt called the meeting "delightful,"<sup>51</sup> They talked about the Seaway and the possibility of a trade

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<sup>45</sup> Willoughby, p. 146.

<sup>46</sup> Willoughby, p. 147.

<sup>47</sup> King Diary, July 16, 1932.

<sup>48</sup> See Canada, Treaties, St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty, (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1933).

<sup>49</sup> Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Herbert Hoover, 1932-33, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 326. Statement About Signing the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty, July 18, 1932.

<sup>50</sup> Hoover, p. 235.

<sup>51</sup> Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1969), p. 17. Press Statement by Roosevelt. The note to this entry mentions that Herridge spoke to Roosevelt about the Seaway and the possibility of a reciprocal trade agreement.

agreement.<sup>52</sup> But Roosevelt had been the Governor of New York while the treaty was being negotiated, and his state was the locus of powerful opposition.

Senator William Borah of Idaho chaired the hearings of the relevant subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Herridge watched the hearings carefully over the months that the Committee held meetings. He had high hopes. He explained to Finlayson that "This is our one big, concrete, construction job."<sup>53</sup> The employment created by the construction would give jobs to thousands of Canadians. He lobbied the Senators, trying to convince them of the merits of the treaty, but there were more opponents of the treaty than those in support. Opposition came primarily from East Coast ports and railways, New York State Waterways, and lake carriers,<sup>54</sup> groups that constituted a strong lobby in Washington. One railway representative said that "Canada has everything to gain and nothing to lose, while the United States has everything to lose and nothing to gain."<sup>55</sup> It was also argued that the seaway constituted a security threat to the United States, because it could be used as a point of attack. Herridge realized that the outcome of the hearings depended on Roosevelt.<sup>56</sup> If he gave his full support to the treaty, it would go through.

Herridge kept Bennett abreast of developments, which seemed for a while favourable. The Minister reported Senator Borah's remark that: "If this treaty is rejected, I have the conviction that Canada will never give us another one."<sup>57</sup> Herridge warned the Prime Minister that the amount of money the federal government in the United States had spent on improvements to the New York State Barge Canal was one decisive argument in the Senate against the treaty. The Minister to the United States was afraid that the

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<sup>52</sup> Nixon, p. 17.

<sup>53</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Finlayson, Feb. 10, 1933. reel M1024, pp. 183455-456.

<sup>54</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Nov. 19, 1932. reel M1022, pp. 180690-694.

<sup>55</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Nov. 19, 1932. reel M1022, pp. 180690-694. There was a lot of uncertainty as to what would happen with the subcommittee. Roosevelt had not been inaugurated yet and everyone was waiting to see what he would do.

<sup>56</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Dec. 2, 1932. reel M1022, pp. 180740-749.

<sup>57</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Dec. 3, 1932. reel M1022, pp. 180750-752.

Americans would construct an all-American route as an alternative to the St. Lawrence.<sup>58</sup> This was always a threat. The United States could construct its own Seaway through the Hudson River and its canals. The Minister learned from representatives of the New York Power Authority that Roosevelt had told them that the treaty would be ratified by the Senate.<sup>59</sup> The subcommittee made peace with them by reaching an agreement with Frank P. Walsh, who was in charge of the New York Power Authority, over the allocation of resources from the proposed power stations.<sup>60</sup> The subcommittee approved the treaty overwhelmingly and submitted it to the Senate.

Roosevelt spoke to the Senate on January 10, 1934, recommending immediate ratification of the St. Lawrence Waterway Treaty. Herridge told Bennett that debate would begin in the afternoon of the 11<sup>th</sup>. He expected vigorous opposition, saying: "It will be very close."<sup>61</sup> Day by day, Herridge reported on the events in the Senate. The debate in fact opened on January 12. Reservations and difficulties mounted as time went on. The decision by the 1932 Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa to institute a trade preference for British Empire goods led some Senators to think that Canada should be punished for its discriminatory commercial practices.<sup>62</sup> Opponents charged Canada's power interests with supporting lobby groups in the States in favour of the treaty, such as the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Tidewater Association.<sup>63</sup> The American senators seemed to forget that this was a United States initiative. Support and opposition was in even balance in the Senate by February 27,<sup>64</sup> but a two-thirds majority was necessary for ratification.

The vote was taken early since the treaty's supporters were sure they could not succeed, and had already begun to think of amending the document.<sup>65</sup> The treaty was

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<sup>58</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Oct. 6, 1933. reel M1023, p. 182196.

<sup>59</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Apr. 17, 1933. reel M1023, pp. 181620-621.

<sup>60</sup> Willoughby, p. 150.

<sup>61</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Jan. 11, 1934. reel M1023, p. 182425.

<sup>62</sup> Bennett Papers, Hume Wrong to Bennett, Feb. 15, 1934. reel M1023, pp. 182520-521.

<sup>63</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Mar. 13, 1934. reel M1023, p. 182586.

<sup>64</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Feb. 27, 1934. reel M1023, p. 182558.

<sup>65</sup> Bennett Papers, Hume Wrong to Bennett, Mar. 15, 1934. reel M1023, p. 182607.



defeated on March 12, 1934, 46 to 42, with 8 not voting. It was a case of Congress going against the wishes of a President, but one no longer in office. As for President Roosevelt, he was at best ambivalent. In his Memoirs, Hoover recalls: "Mr. Roosevelt recommended the treaty to Congress, but for some reason did not push it although he had a large majority of his party in both houses."<sup>66</sup> Not surprisingly, the Senators voted according to the special interests of their regions. Herridge reported to Bennett that:

The Treaty's fate was determined by the combined pressure brought to bear by the railway companies, port authorities, and power interests in the States along the Atlantic seaboard. Their propaganda, operating mainly through Chambers of Commerce and other commercial organizations, was skillfully enough conducted to win from the Administration the support of nearly all the regular Democratic Senators from these States, and to cause all the Republican Senators, with the single exception of one Senator from Vermont, to turn against President Hoover's favourite project. One's general conclusion must be that the Treaty was beaten mainly through the activities of the transportation and power interests, successfully operating to establish an appearance of a sectional cleavage of interest.<sup>67</sup>

These were widely held views.

The defeat was a severe blow to Herridge, and he was despondent over the failure of the treaty. He was very disappointed with Roosevelt's performance. The President, other than his speech of support, had exerted no pressure or effort in favour of the treaty. After the vote, Roosevelt made a speech raising the fear of a Canadian only Seaway, but it was too late for such tactics.<sup>68</sup> Herridge told Bennett: "The St. Lawrence Waterway Treaty, though endorsed by the President, was not made an integral element of his sessional program, and the forces of resistance were too strong without his open support."<sup>69</sup>

Mitchell Hepburn, leader of the provincial Liberals in Ontario, won a landslide victory in 1934 and announced that he would not carry out the cost-allocation arrangement signed by his predecessor in 1932 with the government in Ottawa.<sup>70</sup> Herridge suggested to Bennett that he outmaneuver both Taschereau (still opposing the treaty) and Hepburn by

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<sup>66</sup> Hoover, p. 235.

<sup>67</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Mar. 17, 1934. reel M1023, pp. 182608-611.

<sup>68</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Mar. 17, 1934. reel M1023, pp. 182608-611.

<sup>69</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, June 16, 1933. reel M1023, pp. 181845-855.

<sup>70</sup> Willoughby, p. 161.

linking both to big business interests in their opposition to the St. Lawrence Treaty.

Herridge believed that public ownership could be a strong rallying cry to excite the public in the next election campaign. "The continent is moving fast toward public ownership of the utilities, in which are included the energy industries. I suggest we get on the bandwagon."<sup>71</sup>

Herridge had worked with the Americans to make changes to the treaty to render it more attractive to the American Senate even before it was voted down. He agreed with the State Department on several problems in the treaty. Amendments to the treaty were executed.<sup>72</sup> In January 1935 there still seemed to be hope. State's William Phillips had repeated the assurances already given Herridge of Roosevelt's desire to have the treaty go through.<sup>73</sup> There were 18 doubtful senators; 13 of them were needed for the two-thirds majority. Herridge told Finlayson that he had "no doubt that the President can manage this if he goes after them."<sup>74</sup> At the end of January, Roosevelt submitted the treaty to the Senate again, revised to his liking, "confident that changes will bring approval."<sup>75</sup> The Senate was not impressed, and the treaty was defeated a second time.

Meanwhile, Herridge was devising some dirty political tricks. He suggested that the treaty be introduced in the Canadian Senate, hoping that they would dismember it so that blame could be heaped on big business. Then the Liberals and Progressives would rush to the treaty, as would the public. "If we handle the St. Lawrence Waterway Treaty properly, we could make a real political asset out of it."<sup>76</sup> But it was too late for the Conservatives and Herridge's treaty.

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<sup>71</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Finlayson, Nov. 20, 1934. reel M1467, pp. 510873-876.

<sup>72</sup> *New York Times*. 'Yields to Stimson on Seaway Point.' January 21, 1933.

<sup>73</sup> Bennett Papers, Hume Wrong to O. D. Skelton, Dec. 10, 1934. reel M1019. pp. 176863-865.

<sup>74</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Finlayson, Jan. 29, 1935. reel M1025, pp. 184705-707.

<sup>75</sup> *New York Times*. 'Parleys Revamp Waterway Treaty.' January 16, 1935. p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Finlayson, Jan. 29, 1935. reel M1025, pp. 184705-707.

## II. RECIPROCITY AND RHETORIC

The American Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930 discouraged trade between Canada and the United States. It was a typically Republican response to the hardships of the American agricultural community after the onset of the Depression. Smoot-Hawley was a tariff developed to diminish imports from all nations and thereby help American farmers who were struggling despite previous tariff concessions.<sup>1</sup> The American Minister to Ottawa, William Phillips, had warned President Hoover of the possible Canadian response to higher tariffs shortly before his inauguration in 1929.<sup>2</sup> Hoover, despite warnings from economists and State Department officials, allowed Smoot-Hawley to become law.<sup>3</sup> Unable to get a Seaway out of Canada for American farmers, he was at least able to deliver the tariff.<sup>4</sup> It had a major effect on Canada. In reaction, Mackenzie King's finance minister, Charles Dunning, issued what came to be known as the Dunning budget of 1930, which hiked tariffs against American goods and attempted to redirect trade to the United Kingdom. The budget provided for "countervailing duties" to raise tariffs to precisely the levels brought about by any outside increases.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately for King and the Liberals, it was not seen by Canadians as enough.

Smoot-Hawley neatly handed Herridge and Bennett an election issue, and they took full advantage. Herridge, through Bennett, promised to employ the weapon of sky high

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<sup>1</sup> Such as the Fordney-McCumber tariff of 1922.

<sup>2</sup> J. L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer, For Better or for Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1991), p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Granatstein and Hillmer, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Richard N. Kottman, 'Herbert Hoover and the Smoot-Hawley Tariff: Canada, A Case Study,' Journal of American History vol. 62, no. 3, December 1975, p. 615.

<sup>5</sup> Granatstein and Hillmer, p. 96.

tariffs. Immediately upon his election, Prime Minister Bennett raised the tariff to unprecedented heights. He also bestowed upon the Revenue Minister the right to fix arbitrarily the valuation of goods for customs purposes and to impose a dumping duty on them.<sup>6</sup> All gold exports were halted to allow the government to keep up its payments on obligations payable in gold to maintain the Canadian credit structure.<sup>7</sup> The three moves flowed directly from Herridge's forceful election rhetoric.

Yet Herridge was anything but anti-American. Indeed, Richard Kottman, an American historian, argues that it was Herridge who pushed Bennett towards closer relations with the United States<sup>8</sup> with special relation to Canada-United States trade relations during the Depression. Marc T. Boucher, the only other historian to deal with reciprocity in any detail, gives a shorter but more telling account of Herridge's efforts to initiate trade negotiations with the United States. He wrote that Herridge made "several pointed attempts to commit Washington to begin serious trade discussions, but always without success."<sup>9</sup> Larry Glassford, in an article primarily concerning Bennett, mentioned that Herridge set up a meeting between Bennett and Roosevelt to discuss trade negotiations in 1933.<sup>10</sup> It is unknown how this was arranged, what was agreed upon by Bennett and Roosevelt, or what role, if any was played by Herridge. He was certainly present for the meeting, but there is

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Charles Kasurak, "The United States Legation at Ottawa, 1927-1941, An Institutional Study," (Duke University: M. A. Thesis, 1976), p. 134. Oct. 10, 1931. Achieved by an Order in Council. Cited from Alex I. Inglis ed., Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 5, 1931-35, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1973), p. 165.

<sup>7</sup> Alex I. Inglis ed., Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 5, 1931-35, (DCER), (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1973), p. 165, Skelton to Herridge, October 20, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> Richard N. Kottman, Reciprocity and the North Atlantic Triangle, 1932-1938, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 87.

<sup>9</sup> Marc T. Boucher, 'The Politics of Economic Depression: Canadian-American relations in the mid-1930s,' International Journal vol. XLI, no. 1, Winter 1985-6, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Larry A. Glassford, 'Retrenchment - R.B. Bennett Style: The Conservative Record Before the New Deal, 1930-34,' The American Review of Canadian Studies vol. XIX, no. 2, Summer 1989, p. 147.

no record of what he or anyone else said. Consistent with the historiographical pattern, none of these authors go into real detail on Herridge's role.

Herridge had written in Bennett's campaign speeches of 1930 that they would "end unemployment or perish in the attempt."<sup>11</sup> They had hopes that improved trade would result from their policies, and Bennett particularly focussed on Great Britain. King criticized Bennett's high tariff stand, arguing that it would discriminate against the British. Bennett countered that he was "for the British Empire next to Canada," [while] "some gentlemen are for the United States before Canada."<sup>12</sup> Soon after the election of 1930, Bennett attended the Imperial Conference in London with Herridge as his personal advisor. They pushed the British for Imperial preferential trade, but did so in an aggressive and unhelpful way which was thought anti-British by many in the imperial metropolis. Great Britain remained essentially a nation committed to free trade, but Bennett was able to exact a promise from the British to meet in 1931 for an Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa.

The Economic Conference was not held until the summer of 1932. Herridge was in Ottawa then, but with no official role. From behind the scenes, Finlayson remembered, it was Herridge who advised Bennett to hold out against the British delegation.<sup>13</sup> Herridge believed that, if Bennett could take the initiative, putting the British on the defensive, he would be able to wring better concessions out of the British.<sup>14</sup> It was a strategy Herridge

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<sup>11</sup> Larry A. Glassford, Reaction and Reform: The Politics of the Conservative Party Under R. B. Bennett, 1927-1938, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 81. Cited from W. D. Herridge Papers (private), file: U.S. Convention; Charles Vining.

<sup>12</sup> J. H. Thompson with Allen Seager, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), p. 202.

<sup>13</sup> Mary E. Hallett, "W. D. Herridge and the New Democracy Movement," (Queen's University: M. A. Thesis, April 1964), p. 9n. Interview with R. K. Finlayson, May 11, 1963.

<sup>14</sup> Kottman, Reciprocity, p. 27. Cited from unsigned memos, "Most private and confidential," no. 3, pp. 1, 3 (Bennett Papers, Vol. F-93); and Herridge to Bennett, undated. (Bennett Papers, Vol. F-93).

would use in the future. The British government had changed since 1930 and free trade had been abandoned because of the severity of the Depression. The conference came close to failing because of Bennett's personality and his bizarre negotiating tactics, but eventually a series of bilateral agreements was reached between the participating Dominions that came to be known as the Ottawa Agreements. Herridge consistently counseled Bennett to give nothing away to the British for sentimental reasons. The Herridge plan was confrontation followed by compromise.

Although the Ottawa Agreements helped bolster Canada's trade with Britain, they were not enough to ensure economic recovery. Herridge pushed Bennett towards the United States market. Historian Richard Kottman believes that Herridge was "the man largely responsible" for Bennett's approach to Washington seeking a reciprocal trade agreement.<sup>15</sup> At the end of 1932, Herridge wrote Bennett that increased trade through an agreement with the United States "deserves our careful exploration."<sup>16</sup> As 1932 turned to 1933, it was becoming apparent that the economic situation was still deteriorating in Canada. The worse conditions became, the more likely it was that Herridge's advice would find a receptive audience.

The United States, with the election of Franklin Roosevelt, had a policy of seeking reciprocity around the world, along with a Secretary of State, Cordell Hull,<sup>17</sup> obsessed in that direction. Just to complicate matters, it remained a very protectionist country; even huge reductions in tariffs would leave the United States with a firm protectionist stance. The

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<sup>15</sup> Kottman, Reciprocity, p. 87.

<sup>16</sup> National Archives of Canada, Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Nov. 15, 1932. reel M1024, p. 183554.

<sup>17</sup> Edgar B. Nixon ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1969), p. 17. Senator Cordell Hull accepted the position of Secretary of State on February 21, 1933.

Canadian Liberals, meanwhile, realizing that a Democratic administration might be open to ideas of reciprocal trade, attempted in February 1933, to embarrass a Bennett government committed to Imperial trade and proposed that Canada initiate negotiations for a Canadian-American trade agreement.<sup>18</sup> The Prime Minister countered by expressing a willingness “to negotiate on terms that are fair and reasonable.”<sup>19</sup> Bennett and Herridge were already operating under the assumption that the new Roosevelt administration would be more interested in freer trade. At Herridge’s first meeting with the President-elect, the Canadian Minister suggested a reciprocal trade agreement.<sup>20</sup> Herridge “sought” this interview with the President-elect,<sup>21</sup> obviously wanting action on this front and believing that Roosevelt’s election rhetoric about reciprocity was promising. Herridge was only too aware of opposition in the party and the country. The *New York Times* noted that the “Canadian Government is reported agreeable if the initiative is taken by the United States.”<sup>22</sup>

Herridge was able to “convince a difficult, and often procrastinating, Bennett to adopt a plan aimed at ‘shocking the United States into opening negotiations.’”<sup>23</sup> The two governments began informal communications on the subject when Bennett met with Pierre de L. Boal, the U.S. chargé in Ottawa, in February 1933, and “assured him of his desire to enter into negotiations.” De Boal explained Bennett’s predicament: “Bennett knew he had to turn to the United States to free himself from the criticism that his economic policy in

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<sup>18</sup> H. Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Prism of Unity, 1932-1939, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 46. *Can. H. of C. Debates*, Feb. 20, 1933, p. 2253.

<sup>19</sup> Neatby, p. 46. *Can. H. of C. Debates*, Feb. 20, 1933, p. 2266.

<sup>20</sup> Nixon, p. 17. Press Statement by Roosevelt. February 21, 1933.

<sup>21</sup> *New York Times*. ‘Hull and Woodin Named for Cabinet to Speed Action on World Economics.’ Feb. 22, 1933. p. 1, and Herridge Papers (private), File S 5, Herridge to Cordell Hull, 14 Nov. 1934.

<sup>22</sup> *New York Times*. ‘Hull and Woodin Named for Cabinet to Speed Action on World Economics.’ Feb. 22, 1933. p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Boucher, p. 13.

embracing the Empire has isolated Canada from its natural market, the United States.”<sup>24</sup>  
This was reasonable, and the election of President Roosevelt promised to be a further  
incentive to freer trade.<sup>25</sup>

Boal, on March 29, 1933, wrote a long despatch to Secretary of State Hull, apprising  
him of the situation in Canada. The Americans had to be careful in their dealings with  
Canada since, as Boal put it, “They must be assured that we are not attempting to absorb  
them economically or to dominate them financially and that we will be as conscientious in  
seeking to make this agreement operate to their national advantage as to our own.”<sup>26</sup>

The Americans were thus aware from the outset of the political climate in Canada.  
Boal noted that “Opinion throughout Canada is crystallizing to press upon the government  
for an agreement with the United States.”<sup>27</sup> Bennett’s government was also facing  
considerable criticism from the Liberals. Boal reported that “It is politically timely and  
expedient for the Canadian Government to make such an agreement to still the criticism of  
the Liberal party that Canada’s future welfare has been sacrificed in the Ottawa  
agreements.” He continued, “I am inclined to believe that although it will be difficult to do  
so, it should be possible to obtain some changes in the Ottawa agreements in the interest of  
a substantial trade agreement with the United States.”<sup>28</sup>

Before Bennett’s Herridge-arranged visit to meet President Roosevelt, he went to  
see Boal at the American Legation in Ottawa. Bennett stressed that Canada was dependent

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<sup>24</sup> National Archives of the United States, State Department, Pierre de L. Boal to Secretary of State Hull, Ottawa, 21 February 1933, SDDF 1930-39, box 3178, RG 59. Boal rented Herridge’s house at 30 Goulbourn while Herridge was in Washington. Ottawa City Directory, 1933.

<sup>25</sup> Roosevelt was inaugurated on March 4, 1933.

<sup>26</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1933. vol. II (Washington, 1949), p. 39. Chargé in Ottawa to Secretary of State, March 29, 1933.

<sup>27</sup> FRUS, 1933, II, p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> FRUS, 1933, II, p. 43.



on a considerable amount of tariff protection but still desired an economic agreement with the United States.<sup>29</sup> Boal reported that:

He does believe that if far-reaching international solutions are not arrived at this year between the principal governments of the world, then the orthodox line of action which has been the basis of his practice of government in Canada must be abandoned. He has stood for the fulfillment of Canadian obligations and the maintenance of Canadian credit, but he tells me that if an agreement is not reached this year this line of action will no longer be possible. He tells me that he has already drafted a plan of action to be taken in the event of failure of the World Economic Conference—a plan of which even his colleagues in the Cabinet have no knowledge. I gather from what he said that it would probably involve inflation and of necessity the abandonment of Canada's present determination to pay its foreign obligations, and that it would of necessity launch Canada into a number of untried social and economic experiments the outcome of which no one at the moment could foresee.<sup>30</sup>

Bennett visited Roosevelt in Washington at the end of April, 1933.<sup>31</sup> In the interest of freer trade, Roosevelt and Bennett agreed "to begin a search for means to increase the exchange of commodities between our two countries."<sup>32</sup> Very little was accomplished by this meeting, but Bennett used the opportunity to be seen and photographed with the popular new president, something that he had not done with Hoover. The Canadians faced a setback in their strides towards reciprocity.

The Canadian Minister was forced into the hospital in early May by a bout of appendicitis.<sup>33</sup> He was out of action from Monday May 8, 1933, when he underwent an operation in Ottawa, to the 15<sup>th</sup>. A relapse set in on the night of Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup>, but by Friday, he was rapidly improving. Bennett spent Friday at the hospital with Herridge and

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<sup>29</sup> *FRUS*, 1933, II, p. 44. April 14, 1933, Chargé Boal in Ottawa to Under Secretary of State Phillips.

<sup>30</sup> *FRUS*, 1933, II, pp. 45-46.

<sup>31</sup> Nixon, p. 78. Press Conference, April 28, 1933.

<sup>32</sup> *DCER*, p. 252. Joint Statement for the Press by President and Prime Minister, April 29, 1933.

<sup>33</sup> *New York Times*, May 9, 1933.

specialists were even brought in from Montreal.<sup>34</sup> This slowed the momentum of Herridge's efforts for an agreement.

On November 20, 1933, Herridge visited Under Secretary of State William Phillips to see why nothing was being done with respect to reciprocity with Canada. Herridge said it was "high time to move forward in this respect" and that "he had not pressed the matter because he was well aware of the emergency program undertaken by the National Recovery Administration and felt that Canada should not interfere with the remedies the American people were putting into effect to find a solution for their own economic difficulties." Herridge then changed his tone. He warned that a point had been reached "where there was now a parting of the ways—if American tariffs against Canadian imports were raised further; that there was bound to be further retaliation in Canada against the United States."<sup>35</sup> Herridge did not have in mind a reciprocal trade treaty,<sup>36</sup> necessitating submission to the U.S. Senate, but rather the selection of a few items which, by an exchange of notes, could be granted improved rates. In discussion with Phillips, Herridge asked that the State Department consider the idea of asking the Tariff Commission to study a "50% reduction of tariffs on potatoes, lumber, cattle, and fish and in return he could promise facilitating the entry into Canada of American vegetables and fruits, farm machinery and other

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<sup>34</sup> *Winnipeg Free Press*, Saturday May 13, 1933.

<sup>35</sup> *FRUS*, 1933, II, pp. 51-52. November 20, 1933, Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Phillips) of a conversation with the Canadian Minister (Herridge).

<sup>36</sup> Herridge recalled a conversation between Hickerson and Wrong when Hickerson said that he did not think that a comprehensive treaty with Canada would be able to get a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate because of the opposition to a trade agreement that would surely arise from interest groups in Canada and the United States. The countries which had been invited to enter upon informal conversations with the United States had been selected because of the fact that the products which they export to the United States present fewer difficulties and complexities than in the case of other countries. *FRUS*, 1933, II, p. 51. July 15, 1933, Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Western European Affairs (Hickerson) of a Conversation with the Counselor of the Canadian Legation (Wrong).

manufactured articles.”<sup>37</sup> Herridge was trying to create some mechanism that would start trade moving, a step in the right direction.

In January of 1934, Herridge informally spoke with Phillips, who later informed Roosevelt that the Canadian was very anxious to talk with him concerning the possibility of negotiating an agreement.<sup>38</sup> The State Department adopted a delaying tactic. Everything hinged on Roosevelt’s ability to have Congress enact the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, which would allow him to negotiate certain agreements without Senate approval. In early February Cordell Hull put Herridge off, saying they would have to wait until Congress acted.<sup>39</sup> Hull mentioned that, if congressional authority proved not to be forthcoming, “we would then look at the next best alternative which would at least include his [Herridge’s] suggestions.”<sup>40</sup> Any small gesture of goodwill would have been acceptable to Herridge. Hull wrote that Herridge seemed “very desirous of taking some small step at least towards more liberal trade relations.”<sup>41</sup>

Two months later, Herridge was still urging on Bennett the importance of an agreement with the United States. He warned Bennett that: “We cannot afford to wait. For economic nationalism in Canada is just another name for economic ruin.”<sup>42</sup> And on May 9, 1934, Herridge told the Prime Minister: “If and when the Tariff Bill becomes law, I think that we should immediately press for the initiation of negotiations leading to the signing of a trade agreement. From every angle, political and economic, and on the basis of

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<sup>37</sup> FRUS, 1933, II, pp. 51-52. November 20, 1933, Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Phillips) of a conversation with the Canadian Minister (Herridge).

<sup>38</sup> Roosevelt Papers, William Phillips to Roosevelt, Jan. 9, 1934.

<sup>39</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States, 1934. vol. I (Washington, 1951), p. 845. February 8, 1934, Memorandum by the Secretary of State (Hull) of a conversation with the Canadian Minister (Herridge).

<sup>40</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 845.

<sup>41</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 845.

<sup>42</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, April 7, 1934.

either success or failure, I believe that this move will prove to be a wise one.”<sup>43</sup> They only had to wait for the Americans.

The Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act was finally signed in June of 1934. It allowed President Roosevelt to negotiate and sign off on up to 50 percent tariff reductions with the principal supplier of a given commodity.<sup>44</sup> After the Act was passed, Roosevelt told the State Department of his wish to start negotiations with Canada, but the State Department warned against feeding the Bennett ego by negotiating the first agreement with Canada. Phillips was told that “Mr. Bennett would in such circumstances be in a position to say to the people of Canada that he had brought the United States to its knees by tariff retaliation and forced us to sign a trade agreement.”<sup>45</sup> This stopped immediate preparations for an agreement with Canada; Sweden and Belgium received trade agreements instead. Herridge wanted action and pressured Bennett to allow him to put the State Department on the defensive. King meanwhile, grandstanding in hopes of a forthcoming election, promised to negotiate a “real reciprocal treaty with the United States as soon as Washington was willing.”<sup>46</sup>

The road leading to formal negotiations began on August 4, 1934, with Herridge urging Bennett to use Roosevelt’s own trade rhetoric to force the United States into negotiations. The Minister included an example out of one of Roosevelt’s speeches. He had said that: “ideally, trade between any two countries should be in balance.” The

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<sup>43</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, May 9, 1934. reel M1025. p. 184958.

<sup>44</sup> Ian Drummond and Norman Hillmer, Negotiating Freer Trade, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and the Trade Agreements of 1938, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1989), p. 20.

<sup>45</sup> Lawrence Martin, The Presidents and The Prime Ministers, Washington and Ottawa Face to Face: The Myth of Bilateral Bliss, 1867-1982, (Markham: Paperjacks Ltd., 1983), p. 109.

<sup>46</sup> *New York Times*. ‘Canada seeks date for a deal with US.’ July 6, 1934.

Minister advocated a direct approach to the Secretary of State, suggesting that it include an example. Herridge reminded Bennett that “of course, this is economic bunk, but at least we have a right to expect them to try to fit facts to their theories.”<sup>47</sup> He also pointed out that, if the Americans refused to look into negotiations, the Conservatives would be able to tell the Canadian people that they had tried to reach an agreement with the United States but that the U. S. had refused. It would be an issue, “a powerful one,”<sup>48</sup> that Canadians could not ignore. Bennett would be able to blast the Liberals. Herridge was interested in the successful conclusion of an agreement which would be to Canada’s benefit. He was also interested in the partisan political advantage of the issue – whichever way it broke.

Bennett agreed with Herridge’s logic and gave his approval to a future Canadian initiative. On August 6, 1934, Herridge brought up the subject with John D. Hickerson, the State Department’s leading expert on Canada. Herridge conveyed his government’s willingness to negotiate a trade agreement, telling Hickerson that “Canada must increase her trade and that if she can not do it with us she will have to look elsewhere.”<sup>49</sup> Herridge might have given too much away in revealing “candidly that 1935 would be an election year in Canada and failure by the Conservative government to obtain a trade agreement with the United States would hurt its chances at the polls.”<sup>50</sup> Hickerson reported that Herridge “said that the Bennett Government faced an election next year and that if they did not

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<sup>47</sup> Kottman, Reciprocity, p. 93. Herridge to Bennett, Aug. 4, 1934, Bennett Papers, Vol. F-242.

<sup>48</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, August 4, 1934.

<sup>49</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 846. August 7, 1934, Memorandum by the Acting Chief of the division of Western European Affairs (Hickerson) of a conversation with the Canadian Minister (Herridge).

<sup>50</sup> Richard N. Kottman, ‘The Canadian-American Trade Agreement of 1935,’ Journal of American History Vol. LII, Sept. 1965, p. 280. told this to Hickerson..... Memorandum by Hickerson, Aug. 7, 1934, 611.4231/883.

succeed in getting a trade agreement with the United States they would be very bitterly criticized by the Liberals in the campaign.”<sup>51</sup>

If Canada could not get a trade agreement between the two countries, Herridge told Hickerson, Herridge proposed forestalling criticism by announcing that from March 4, 1933, “Mr. Bennett had waited patiently for the time when he could negotiate a trade agreement with the United States and that he had on numerous occasions informed us of his willingness to enter upon such negotiations.”<sup>52</sup> Herridge said that he would refer in particular to the Prime Minister’s visit to Washington in April 1933, at the invitation of the President; it would be recalled that joint statements were then made expressing the hope that trade negotiations could be started at an early date. He proposed to continue that the American Government had adopted policies which made it unlikely that a trade agreement could be made.<sup>53</sup> Hickerson wrote diplomatically: “I told Mr. Herridge that I believed that he was allowing himself to become unduly discouraged and alarmed.”<sup>54</sup> He added that the discriminatory Ottawa Agreements made it difficult for the Americans to consider any possible agreement.<sup>55</sup>

Herridge told Hickerson on August 6th that he was “very much interested” in looking into a provisional agreement if a comprehensive trade agreement could not be negotiated.<sup>56</sup> Hickerson replied in confidence that, because of the drought in the United States, there might be a need to import hay from Canada, an action that could become a

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<sup>51</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 846. August 7, 1934, Memorandum by the Acting Chief of the division of Western European Affairs (Hickerson) of a conversation with the Canadian Minister (Herridge).

<sup>52</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 846.

<sup>53</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 846.

<sup>54</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 846.

<sup>55</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 846.

<sup>56</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 847.

stepping stone to a provisional agreement.<sup>57</sup> Hickerson put off Herridge on the subject of items that could be included in a provisional agreement, but mentioned whiskey, seed potatoes and alsike clover seed.<sup>58</sup> Herridge did not think that it was enough. Hickerson said that he “assumed that any reduction we might be able to make on whiskey would be exceedingly helpful” for the balance of trade.<sup>59</sup>

Herridge replied to Hickerson on the 9<sup>th</sup> during a conversation between the two regarding the import of hay and oats into the United States without duty. Canada had no oats and very little hay to export because of similar shortages in Canada.<sup>60</sup> In addition, the matter of hay was too small to stimulate “support for a provisional trade agreement.”<sup>61</sup> Herridge said that he was “here [in Washington] to do business.”<sup>62</sup> If the United States would not make an agreement with Canada, he reiterated, they would have to look elsewhere.<sup>63</sup> Hickerson said that the United States was also desirous of negotiating a satisfactory agreement to expand trade in both directions and that he would let Herridge know when it was possible to discuss either a provisional or a general trade agreement.<sup>64</sup>

Yet by October 3<sup>rd</sup> no progress had been made towards any kind of agreement. Herridge called on Francis B. Sayre, the Assistant Secretary of State, saying with discouragement that he stood “ready at any time to come in and discuss possible bases for

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<sup>57</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 848. August 7, 1934, Memorandum by the Acting Chief of the division of Western European Affairs (Hickerson) of a conversation with the Canadian Minister (Herridge).

<sup>58</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 848.

<sup>59</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 848.

<sup>60</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 848-9.

<sup>61</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 848. August 9, 1934, Memorandum by the Acting Chief of the division of Western European Affairs (Hickerson) of a conversation with the Canadian Minister (Herridge).

<sup>62</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 849.

<sup>63</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 849.

<sup>64</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 849.

negotiation but that he would not press us [the United States] and would wait until we asked him to take the matter up with us.”<sup>65</sup>

The inaction on the part of the State Department encouraged Herridge to recall his proposal to Bennett of August 4th. On November 1, 1934, Herridge wrote Bennett urging “quick action ... on the suggested note to the Secretary of State,” which was aimed at forcing the American hand. Anticipating an American proposal to discuss a trade agreement, he continued, “I do not believe that anything worth while will result, but such action will succeed in stalling the issue for many months. Failure to get anywhere will simply support the grits’ [Liberals’] stand that we won’t and the U.S. can’t do business. If however you jump in ahead with a good bold note, you will have the administration on the defensive--as I have had it for the past year.”<sup>66</sup> Through a leak in the State Department, Herridge knew that the U. S. was studying the possibility of opening negotiations with Canada. Herridge had also been told that the President was worried about the “Canadian situation” and felt that something had to be done, “at least by way of gesture, to improve it.”<sup>67</sup> Bennett followed Herridge’s advice and ordered Finlayson to draft a memo for the American Secretary of State. Finlayson passed it on to Hume Wrong, a member of Canada’s Washington Legation, and Herridge ended up writing the note with Wrong’s assistance.

On November 14, 1934, Cordell Hull received the note personally from Herridge.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 849. October 4, 1934, Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Sayre) of a conversation with the Canadian Minister (Herridge).

<sup>66</sup> Kottman, Reciprocity, p. 91n. Cited from Bennett Papers, Vol. F-242.

<sup>67</sup> Kottman, Reciprocity, p. 92n.

<sup>68</sup> National Archives of the United States, State Department, 611.4231/903, November 15, 1934. Memorandum of a conversation between Hull and Herridge.



It was bold and quite detailed.<sup>69</sup> Herridge followed his earlier advice to Bennett and quoted the Roosevelt Administration's own rhetoric on international trade. He summarized the process leading up to the passage of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, showing extraordinary insight into the workings of the State Department. He pointed out how reliable Canada was in her dealings with the United States: "Since the beginning of the depression, amongst countries heavily indebted to the United States, Canada stands almost alone in having promptly discharged in full its obligations payable in the United States."<sup>70</sup> He rebutted claims that the Ottawa agreements of 1932 were an obstacle to a trade agreement with the United States, and called for a "declaration that their common objective is the attainment of the freest possible exchange of natural products between two countries."<sup>71</sup> The note displayed Herridge's talent for bluntness and decisive action. He wrote lines that were remarkably similar to his vigorous campaign speeches for the leader. The timing of the note was perfect since the Trade Agreements Committee of the United States Congress had begun studying trade relations with Canada on November 9.

The November 14 note was a work of art and deserves to be examined in more detail. It began:

Sir: The Government of Canada for many months have been giving careful consideration to the means whereby the exchange of commodities between Canada and the United States might be increased, and I have been instructed to present a statement of their views for the information of the Government of the United States. The Government of Canada believes that the time has come for definite action and that the declared desire of both Governments to improve conditions of trade between the two countries should now be carried into effect by the negotiation of a comprehensive trade agreement."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> DCER, p. 176. Herridge to Hull, Nov. 14, 1934.

<sup>70</sup> DCER, p. 182.

<sup>71</sup> DCER, p. 182.

<sup>72</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 849. November 14, 1934, Memorandum from the Canadian Minister (Herridge) to the Secretary of State (Hull).

Herridge then related the events leading to that point. He reminded the Americans of the meeting with Roosevelt and their joint declaration to “seek an increase in commodity exchange.”<sup>73</sup> He stated the policy of the Government of Canada as set out “by the Prime Minister of Canada speaking in the House of Commons on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1934. Mr. Bennett on that occasion referred to the fact that the governments of the United States and Canada had agreed to begin a search for means to increase the exchange of commodities between the two countries and thereby promote not only economic betterment on the North American continent, but also a general improvement of world conditions, and indicated that the policy of the Government was to continue their efforts to that end.”

Herridge then laid great emphasis on the U.S. government’s professed commitment to freer trade. The Department of State had issued, for example, a statement to the press on February 22, 1934, concerning trade negotiations with Canada:

The trade between the United States and Canada is larger in normal times than that between any two countries in the world, and it is natural that both countries should desire to restore the reciprocal flow of commodities to normal proportions. We hope to be in a position at an early date to take steps looking to the conclusion of a trade agreement with Canada which will further the interests of both countries. We hope thus to bring into practical application the ‘good neighbor’ policy between these two great countries which have so much in common.<sup>74</sup>

And, with respect to a trade agreement with Cuba, the Americans had said their objective was “to break down all artificial and excessive impediments put in the way of world commerce, not only in our own interest but for the benefit of all others as well, since only by restoring

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<sup>73</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 850. November 14, 1934, Memorandum from the Canadian Minister (Herridge) to the Secretary of State (Hull).

<sup>74</sup> DCER, p. 178. Herridge to Hull, Nov. 14, 1934.

the whole world can individual countries hope to remain economically healthy long.”<sup>75</sup>

Throwing one’s own words in an adversary’s face was standard Herridge procedure.

Herridge stressed the importance of trade between Canada and the United States:

For many years each country has provided the other with either its largest or its second largest foreign market. From 1927 to 1932, and again in the first nine months of 1934, the total trade between Canada and the United States was greater than the total trade between the United States and any other country. In the last ten years, according to figures of the Department of Commerce of the United States, the aggregate value of the trade between the two countries was more than ten billion dollars, and in the single year of 1929 it reached the great figure of \$1.451 millions. During the decade ending in 1933 Canada provided a market for the products of the United States larger by one-fourth than the whole of Asia, about twice as large as Germany or all South America, nearly three times as large as France or Japan, nearly seven times as large as China, and more than ten times as large as the Soviet Union.<sup>76</sup>

American attacks on the Ottawa agreements of 1932 were groundless. Herridge stated that the agreements had been of immense importance in increasing trade between the nations of the British Commonwealth, but the “Ottawa agreements do not, however, preclude and in fact have not precluded the signatories from offering extensive and valuable tariff concessions to other countries, and it may be stated positively that the Government of Canada is free to enter into an agreement with the United States covering a wide range of products.”<sup>77</sup>

The Minister asked the American government to join the Government of Canada in a declaration that their common objective was the freest possible exchange of natural products.<sup>78</sup> Since that would be difficult in the short term, he offered a specific plan for an agreement:

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<sup>75</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 852. November 14, 1934, Memorandum from the Canadian Minister (Herridge) to the Secretary of State (Hull).

<sup>76</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 852. November 14, 1934.

<sup>77</sup> DCER, p. 182. Herridge to Hull, Nov. 14, 1934.

<sup>78</sup> DCER, p. 182. Herridge to Hull, Nov. 14, 1934.

- (a) A mutual undertaking to maintain during the lifetime of the agreement the unrestricted free entry of commodities now on the free list of either country.
- (b) The mutual concession of tariff treatment as favourable as that accorded any other foreign country; this means that Canada would extend to the United States its intermediate tariff, involving reductions from the present rates of duty on some 700 items, including both natural and manufactured products, together with a number of further reductions below the intermediate tariff rates through the extension to the United States of concessions made by Canada in trade conventions with other countries.
- (c) The reduction by 50 per cent. of the existing United States rate of duty, as authorized by the Tariff Act of 1934, on a specified number of natural products, including, *inter alia*, lumber, fish, potatoes, milk and cream, and live cattle; a number of other agricultural products, and several minerals both metallic and non-metallic.
- (d) The reduction of existing rates of duty by the United States on a number of partly or wholly manufactured products of Canada, including some processed natural products and certain products in which hydro-electric power comprises an important element in the cost of production.
- (e) The reduction of the existing rates of duty by Canada on a number of natural and partly or wholly manufactured products of the United States.<sup>79</sup>

Herridge asked that negotiations begin immediately, and asked for a reply to his note.

On the day of Herridge's note, Henry F. Grady, the Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Trade Agreements, wrote to Assistant Secretary of State Sayre that the Committee had approved a proposal to inform Herridge that the American Government "is prepared to study the scope and terms of a trade agreement to be concluded with Canada and the suggestion would be made to the Minister that his Government make similar studies."<sup>80</sup> Grady laid out the procedure for starting negotiations for an agreement, saying that no public announcement would be made until the scope of the agreement could be agreed upon and that "the plan is that the preliminary studies would be completed by the middle of January."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> DCER, p. 183.

<sup>80</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 858. November 14, 1934, Memorandum from the Chairman of the Committee on Trade Agreements (Grady) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Sayre).

<sup>81</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 858. November 14, 1934, Memorandum from the Chairman of the Committee on Trade Agreements (Grady) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Sayre).

Reacting to Herridge's note, the Minister to Canada, Warren Robbins, wrote to Cordell Hull on November 21, 1934. Robbins characterized the Herridge document as "written with a view to public consumption in Canada for political purposes and the temptation will be to use it and the existence of any negotiations which may be begun as an affecting ammunition in the Parliament this winter and in election next spring or summer."<sup>82</sup> Robbins' chief worry was that Herridge might demand to have the correspondence between the two governments published. He said: "I suggest that the reply when drafted should be of such a nature as to induce the Conservative leaders to hesitate to make public the correspondence for political purposes before signature of an agreement."<sup>83</sup> Further, he said, "we must seek to prevent this issue from becoming a football in Canadian politics."<sup>84</sup> He did admit that "On the face of it and in spite of its vagueness the proposal appears to be generous,"<sup>85</sup> but he did not like the idea of a joint statement mentioning free trade in natural products as an objective.<sup>86</sup>

Robbins went into further detail the next day, November 22, submitting an analysis of Herridge's note. He said that Liberal criticism of the government's trade policies in the House of Commons explained much. "The Conservative Government is endeavoring to place itself in a position where it can show that it is now in negotiation with the United States for a comprehensive trade agreement on a basis which should be of particular

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<sup>82</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 859. November 21, 1934, Memorandum from the Minister in Canada (Robbins) to the Secretary of State (Hull).

<sup>83</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 859.

<sup>84</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 859.

<sup>85</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 859.

<sup>86</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 859.

advantage to Canada.”<sup>87</sup> He went on, “Our reply might make it clear that, in fact, trade with the Empire is of secondary importance when compared with Canada’s trade with the United States. Such a remark should act as a deterrent to the present Government, which sponsored the Ottawa Agreements, from prematurely making the correspondence public in Canada.”<sup>88</sup> Robbins was inclined to take as genuine the Canadian Government’s expressed desire for a speedy conclusion of an agreement, but he recommended that the proposals be carefully examined before the United States agreed to enter upon such negotiations.<sup>89</sup>

Herridge’s proposals looked “rather too good to be true.”<sup>90</sup>

Under Secretary of State Phillips sent for Herridge on December 1, 1934. He explained that it was new to them to receive a note like the one Herridge had delivered, and that he was not quite sure how to respond to it in a positive way without some Canadian amendments.<sup>91</sup> He asked Herridge if he would be willing to consider alterations. Herridge replied at length: “He described the Canadian note as a highly courageous move on the part of the Prime Minister, who had always stood for high tariffs; he emphasized that there was no desire on the Prime Minister’s part to make public now the exchange of notes, but he admitted that Mr. Bennett might request their release after the meeting of Parliament; if there was no publicity at the present moment, he could not see why the note should not stand as it is, inasmuch as the preliminary discussions would presumably have been completed by the time the publication was requested, and he set this date as probably not

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<sup>87</sup> National Archives of the United States, Department of State Files, 611.4231/912, November 22, 1934. Memorandum from the Minister in Canada (Robbins) to the Secretary of State (Hull). p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 7.

<sup>89</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 18.

<sup>90</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 871. December 1, 1934, Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Phillips) of a conversation with W.D. Herridge.

later than February 15th.”<sup>92</sup> Phillips called again for changes, but Herridge did not want to remove the “heart” of the note.<sup>93</sup> The Minister decided to return to Ottawa for consultations with Bennett.

Bennett delivered an address in Brockville on December 5th to a group of Conservatives. He remained belligerent, saying he was “perfectly willing to make a bargain on terms fair and just ... but I don’t want a bargain with any country if I have to give away my country for the bargain.”<sup>94</sup> On the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, Herridge called upon Hull. He said that Bennett could not “see his way to any modification of the note in question.”<sup>95</sup> Hull then promised to send a reply. He insisted that he understood Bennett’s position and problems.<sup>96</sup>

Hull replied to Herridge’s note on December 27. “I fully subscribe” he wrote, “to the views which you express in regard to the importance to each of our countries of its trade with the other.”<sup>97</sup> He agreed with Herridge’s suggestions for starting negotiations and complimented Canada for her financial integrity, writing “I am happy also to take this occasion to express my appreciation of the unflinching determination with which the Dominion and Provincial Governments have met their loan obligations.”<sup>98</sup> The Americans appeared ready to talk: “I believe that a point has now been reached when an exchange of

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<sup>92</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 871. December 1, 1934, Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Phillips) of a conversation with W.D. Herridge.

<sup>93</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 871.

<sup>94</sup> National Archives of the United States, State Department, 611.4231/903, Memorandum by Warren Robbins to Secretary of State Hull. December 6, 1934.

<sup>95</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 872. December 20, 1934, Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Phillips) of a conversation between Cordell Hull and W.D. Herridge.

<sup>96</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 872.

<sup>97</sup> DCER, p. 184. Hull to Herridge, Dec. 27, 1934.

<sup>98</sup> DCER, p. 184. Hull to Herridge, Dec. 27, 1934.

views on this subject with Canada should be undertaken and I am, therefore, gratified to learn that your Government is of the same mind.”<sup>99</sup> Hull, however, would not indicate if it would be possible to make reductions on any particular products pending careful study.<sup>100</sup> Finally he said: “This government holds itself in readiness to begin immediate preparations for trade agreement negotiations.”<sup>101</sup> The Roosevelt administration did not want to associate itself with the idea of the free exchange of natural products, which would incur the wrath of American producers. That was seen by the Americans as “especially annoying.”<sup>102</sup> The Americans felt that the joint declaration idea was included for Canadian consumption. This was not far from the truth but Herridge’s real intention was to give the Americans a jolt.

In January 1935, Herridge wrote a memorandum to O.D. Skelton complaining about the obstacles he was encountering. This time it was the lack of a list of concessions on the Canadian side that caused his frustration. He had been able “to keep the State Department on the defensive”, but they could “very easily carry the war to me, unless I am equipped to meet it.”<sup>103</sup> This was pure Herridge: the battler, the aggressor, the warrior, but also the politician, ever with an eye to the partisan considerations that aggression could yield. But no matter how hard Herridge pushed, he could get no speed from either side. Indeed, he had fallen out with the Prime Minister over the question of bringing the New

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<sup>99</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, p. 873. December 27, 1934, Memorandum from Secretary of State (Hull) to the Canadian Minister in Washington (Herridge).

<sup>100</sup> FRUS, 1934, I, pp. 873-4.

<sup>101</sup> DCER, p. 185. Hull to Herridge, Dec. 27, 1934.

<sup>102</sup> Kottman, Reciprocity, p. 93.

<sup>103</sup> National Archives of Canada, External Affairs, 811-622, Herridge to Skelton, January 22, 1935.



Deal to Canada,<sup>104</sup> and his frosty relations with the Prime Minister cannot have helped the reciprocity negotiations.

The Americans themselves seemed as interested in political style as economic substance. On June 4, 1935, Professor William Y. Elliott of Harvard University visited King in Ottawa as an “unofficial” representative of the U.S. State Department. King gave Elliott some suggestions on how to proceed with the negotiations including the idea to “hook” Bennett into the idea of a broad trade agreement without actually signing one.<sup>105</sup> King told Elliott that “the only way to handle him would be to write into the agreement as many items as possible, no matter how insignificant, in order to give the appearance, at least, of an agreement of some importance.”<sup>106</sup>

The United States was making tentative moves, but Herridge complained to Skelton that all the Americans were offering was “baby stuff.” He said: “I do not understand what that means except that it certainly does not mean a balanced proposition.” The Americans were only offering “a few wholly unimportant concessions.”<sup>107</sup> Hickerson, however, told a Herridge subordinate that the State Department had been working day and night to complete their preparations for the trade negotiations, and that a memorandum embodying the results of their labours would soon be ready.<sup>108</sup>

By now it was early July, and the negotiations did not finally commence until August 26, 1935 against the background of a general election the Prime Minister had called

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<sup>104</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>105</sup> National Archives of the United States, State Department, 611.4231/1171. Memo of conversation with Elliott by Phillips, June 14, 1935.

<sup>106</sup> National Archives of the United States, State Department, 611.4231/1171, p. 1. Memo of conversation with Elliott by Phillips, June 14, 1935.

<sup>107</sup> National Archives of Canada, External Affairs, 811-622, Herridge to Skelton, June 8, 1935.

<sup>108</sup> DCER, p. 190. Herridge to Skelton, July 8, 1935.

for October 14. Herridge, with his impeccable contacts in Washington, led the Canadian team, assisted by Hector McKinnon, Norman Robertson, and Dana Wilgress,<sup>109</sup> who would become the three wise men of 1930s Canadian trade negotiations. The presence of the three negotiators there to assist Herridge was important, since Skelton thought that Herridge, while ambitious, had no grasp of economics.<sup>110</sup> They arrived in Washington secretly so as to not draw any attention to the negotiations.<sup>111</sup>

This group, in the short time that they were all together in Washington, was able to make little progress with the Americans. Herridge was particularly disappointed by the proposed concessions and felt that they were not enough upon which to base a satisfactory trade agreement.<sup>112</sup> The Americans wanted relief from arbitrary valuations for duty purposes, most favoured nation treatment, reduction in duty below the most favoured nation level on some items, and the assurance that products from any third countries might be shipped through United States ports without disability.<sup>113</sup> In an undated summary of U. S. proposals and requests, Herridge listed for Bennett the items on which the United States would not grant concessions. These included:

Fish of the cod family;  
Milk or Cream;  
Potatoes;  
Blueberries;  
Barley and Malt;  
Wheat and other grains.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> John Hilliker, Canada's Department of External Affairs, vol. 1, The Early Years, 1909-1946, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990), pp. 169-70.

<sup>110</sup> National Archives of Canada, Skelton Diary. January 8, 1934.

<sup>111</sup> L.D. Wilgress, Memoirs, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 101.

<sup>112</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States, 1935. vol. II (Washington, 1951), p. 21. August 28, 1935, Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Western European Affairs (Hickerson) to the Secretary of State (Hull).

<sup>113</sup> J. L. Granatstein, A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft 1929-68, (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981), p. 49.

<sup>114</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, undated. reel M1024, p. 183515.

Such were products that the Canadians had in abundance and wished to trade. Unfortunately, the Americans had their own domestic producers of the same products in already depressed markets. The Americans wanted access to Canadian markets for manufactured goods, a traditionally protected sector of the Canadian economy. Herridge commented, "The impression was derived that the United States officials did not appreciate the sweeping character of their requests in relation to the limited number of valuable concessions offered to Canada."<sup>115</sup> The attitude of the Americans, Herridge said rightly, could be summed up by saying that they wanted to "open foreign markets for U.S. products," not open U.S. markets for foreign products that could compete with American ones.<sup>116</sup>

Bennett hurt the negotiations by insisting upon a specific list of concessions and telling Herridge that "the possibility of the conclusion of an agreement on the basis which has been discussed will depend in large measure on the extent to which the United States Government will be able to grant the tariff concessions requested in this list."<sup>117</sup> For the Americans, there was the opposite problem. Herridge wrote that "They felt that the crux of the problem on their side was to determine the concessions which they were prepared to make."<sup>118</sup> The Americans skipped the normal procedure of exchanging lists of demands because they could not decide on anything to give up. Hickerson told Herridge that he

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<sup>115</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, undated. reel M1024, p. 183516.

<sup>116</sup> Gordon T. Stewart, The American Response to Canada since 1776, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), p. 152.

<sup>117</sup> DCER, p. 193. Bennett to Herridge, Sept. 7, 1935.

<sup>118</sup> DCER, p. 191. Herridge to Skelton, July 8, 1935.

hoped to sign an agreement within a month's time, but Herridge told Skelton that: "This impresses me as being an optimistic view of the situation."<sup>119</sup>

As late as September 7, Bennett was himself submitting proposals for Herridge to give to the Americans.<sup>120</sup> The Prime Minister said "the possibility of the conclusion of an agreement on the basis which has been discussed will depend in large measure on the extent to which the United States Government will be able to grant the tariff concessions requested in this list."<sup>121</sup> The trade agreement plans were totally secret to that point.<sup>122</sup> On September 8, 1935, the State Department made public two letters between Herridge and Cordell Hull to advise the public that talks were and had been in progress for nearly a year.<sup>123</sup> These showed that the negotiations were the result of a Canadian initiative. Then, on September 22, an article appeared in the *New York Times*, claiming that Bennett had confided in a reporter that no agreement would be signed before the election in Canada and that there would be no agreement until after the Presidential elections in 1936.<sup>124</sup> Herridge and Skelton were outraged by this report, which was untrue. Herridge denied the story, but it was too late.<sup>125</sup>

On October 8, the Canadians received word that the State Department was suspending negotiations until after the Canadian election. Herridge could not have been surprised. He had written to Skelton on September 21, "I have never dreamt for a moment

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<sup>119</sup> DCER, p. 191.

<sup>120</sup> DCER, p. 192. Bennett to Herridge, September 7, 1935.

<sup>121</sup> DCER, p. 193.

<sup>122</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge's files, reel M1024, p. 183454.

<sup>123</sup> *New York Times*. 'Canada Trade Idea Revealed by Hull.' Sept. 9, 1935. p. 12.

<sup>124</sup> Boucher, p. 26. Cited from *The New York Times*. Sept. 22, 1935.

<sup>125</sup> External Affairs, file 745-167, Memo of a telephone conversation between Skelton and Herridge, Sept. 23, 1935.

that there was the remotest possibility of signing a deal before the fourteenth of October."<sup>126</sup>

After the election, Herridge wrote the new Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, outlining the steps taken towards a freer trade agreement with the United States. Herridge wrote that "It was abundantly clear that the United States was prepared to conclude only a limited agreement of moderate value."<sup>127</sup> In Herridge's final analysis, the Americans wanted too much for too little. Furthermore, Herridge said that the best time to conclude any agreement with the United States would be in "the next six weeks" due to the preparedness on the American side.<sup>128</sup>

The Liberals were willing to pick up where Herridge had left off. King had stated in the House of Commons that the Liberal Party "would negotiate a real reciprocal treaty with the United States."<sup>129</sup> Ian Drummond and Norman Hillmer explained that:

Prime Minister Mackenzie King's approach to tariff cuts and rigid preferences was different from that of his predecessor, R.B. Bennett, so that the change of government in Canada had naturally altered that dominion's negotiating posture. However, it should be remembered that Bennett himself had been anxious for a trade agreement with the United States, and had indeed begun such talks in 1934. Canada's switch from Bennett to King, therefore, could better be called a change in emphasis than a deep sea change.<sup>130</sup>

The change in emphasis could be described as a willingness to accept that the stronger side in the negotiation inevitably reaped the richer rewards.

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<sup>126</sup> C. P. Stacey, Canada in the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, volume 2: 1921-1948: The Mackenzie King Era, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981. p. 172. Cited from Memo, Herridge to Skelton, Sept. 21, 1935. NA RG 25, D1, vol. 811/622.

<sup>127</sup> Herridge Papers, Herridge to Secretary of State, October 22, 1935.

<sup>128</sup> Herridge Papers, Herridge to Secretary of State, October 22, 1935.

<sup>129</sup> *New York Times*. 'Canada Seeks Data for a Deal with US.' July 6, 1934. p. 5.

<sup>130</sup> Drummond and Hillmer, p. 163.

Herridge was not unhappy with the agreement that Mackenzie King signed in mid November 1935. "His criticism of the trade agreement," King recorded in his diary, "was that there would be a return to economic nationalism in the United States, and that the trade agreement was not for a long enough period to secure trade against sudden change due to U.S. policy."<sup>131</sup> Despite this, "Herridge admitted that the trade agreement was an excellent one."<sup>132</sup>

Herridge, negotiating from a position of weakness, had acted as though he was in a position of strength. Historian Richard Kottman quotes Washington Legation official Hume Wrong as writing that: "It is rather bitter for Herridge, who probably did more than anyone to make signature possible, that he will get no public credit and will be condemned in his own party for not getting the agreement before the election..."<sup>133</sup> But the failure lay partly at the feet of Herridge and Bennett, the makers of foreign economic policy. They (led by Herridge) set out the terms of the debate early on with rhetoric of such intensity that they could never be fully trusted in Washington. Herridge himself had helped to kill any chance of freer trade.

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<sup>131</sup> King Diary, January 6, 1936. *The Governor General in a conversation with King.*

<sup>132</sup> King Diary, January 6, 1936. *The Governor General in a conversation with King.*

<sup>133</sup> Kottman, *Reciprocity*, p. 115n.

### III. THE HERRIDGE NEW DEAL

According to the historiography, Herridge played a major, if somewhat undefined, role in the New Deal in Canada. H. Blair Neatby states that: "Herridge persuaded Bennett that what was needed in Canada was a psychological New Deal."<sup>1</sup> Echoing this view is W. H. McConnell, who wrote that Bennett was "urged by his brother-in-law, William D. Herridge, the Canadian Minister to the United States, to inaugurate a Canadian version of Roosevelt's 'New Deal' to save the Conservatives from electoral disaster."<sup>2</sup> J. R. H. Wilbur argues that it was "the words of Herridge that Bennett mouthed to a national radio audience in January, 1935." However, he adds: it "certainly sounded like a dramatic conversion, but if Bennett assumed the reformer's mantle, as I think was the case, he did so at least three years before those broadcasts."<sup>3</sup> Wilbur mentions that Finlayson and "Herridge drew up the New Deal in the summer of 1934 while the Prime Minister was in Europe."<sup>4</sup>

In Washington, Herridge was an observer of Roosevelt in action, and he became an enthusiast of the New Deal's innovations.<sup>5</sup> The President had accepted the idea that the government must take the initiative to restore prosperity, and Americans looked to him, as Herridge told Bennett, "as a leader, who, in some way not wholly revealed, will lead them out of the wilderness of the depression." Little had been done to end the Depression but

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<sup>1</sup> H. Blair Neatby, The Politics of Chaos: Canada in the Thirties, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1986), p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> W.H. McConnell, 'Canada: From Bennett's 'New Deal' to the Meech Lake Accord,' The Round Table vol. 322, 1992, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> J. R. H. Wilbur, 'R.B. Bennett as a Reformer,' Canadian Historical Association: Historical Papers 1969, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> J. R. H. Wilbur, 'H. H. Stevens and the Reconstruction Party,' Canadian Historical Review vol. XLV, no. 1, March 1964, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Berton, The Great Depression, 1929-1939, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), p. 200.

“the spirit of the New Deal is what has really mattered.... The hope and promise of a new heaven and a new earth remain.” Bennett, Herridge continued, had already accomplished a great deal, but he had failed in emotional terms. The Canadian people must be “persuaded that they also have a New Deal, and that that New Deal will do everything for them *in fact* which the New Deal here has done *in fancy*.”<sup>6</sup> As early as September 13, 1933, Herridge was vaguely hinting that a New Deal might be a good idea for Canada. He talked of a “plan for national recovery,” and promised to submit an examination of the principles to base it upon by the end of the month.<sup>7</sup> It took a bit longer.

The first overt mention of a ‘New Deal’ for Canada by Herridge was on January 16, 1934. In a well thought out document of almost twenty pages, he wrote that “the situation is all set for action.”<sup>8</sup> Canada could have a New Deal since the circumstances in Canada were similar to those in the United States. Herridge preached that a New Deal could succeed by “swinging our institutions up and safe upon the tableland of a greater prosperity.”<sup>9</sup> Herridge tried to bring Bennett around to the idea of a New Deal by convincing him that he was already a New Dealer. Some of his legislation of the last few years was already in the spirit of a New Deal, but there was a good deal more to do.<sup>10</sup> Herridge proposed an interesting cross section of people to Bennett as a committee of experts. The committee would include O. D. Skelton of External Affairs, W. C. Clark from Finance, L. D. Wilgress of Trade and Commerce, and General A. G. L. McNaughton,<sup>11</sup> who

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<sup>6</sup> National Archives of Canada, Bennett Papers, W. D. Herridge to R. B. Bennett, April 12, 1934. reel M1025, pp. 184946-57.

<sup>7</sup> J. R. H. Wilbur, The Bennett New Deal: Fraud or Portent? (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1969), p. 68. Herridge to Bennett, September 13, 1933.

<sup>8</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Jan. 16, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184917.

<sup>9</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Jan. 16, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184919.

<sup>10</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Jan. 16, 1934. reel M1025, pp. 184920-921.

<sup>11</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Jan. 16, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184919.



could report to Bennett on reform, and draw up the “Bennett Recovery Programme.”<sup>12</sup> The incentive that Herridge held out was victory: if they could “expand such a programme of constructive reform, I have no doubt whatever that we can carry the country once again.”<sup>13</sup> Another term of Conservative rule would be ushered in – a term of reform.

Herridge was fascinated by the mystique of the American New Deal. He told Bennett that Roosevelt was a leader who “in some way not wholly revealed, will lead them out of the wilderness of depression.”<sup>14</sup> The mystery surrounding the New Deal was one of its chief attributes. Herridge noted: “This New Deal is a sort of Pandora’s box, from which, at suitable intervals, the President has pulled the N. R. A. [National Recovery Administration] and the A. A. A. [Agricultural Adjustment Act] and a lot of other mysterious things. Most of the people never understood the N. R. A. or the A. A. A. any more than they understand the signs of the Zodiac.”<sup>15</sup> The people did not have to understand the New Deal. Roosevelt had promised recovery, and Herridge thought that if people believed Roosevelt could make it happen, it would. Any shred of hope was a positive measure. It had certainly worked in the United States. “Pandora’s box has charmed the people into a new state of mind.”<sup>16</sup> If only they could do it in Canada, they could provide the same, “the hope and promise of a new heaven and a new earth.”<sup>17</sup> Herridge realized that the moral was to “promise all things - a new system, regulation, control and so forth - and ask for a mandate to bring them about. But under no circumstances say how you

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<sup>12</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Jan. 16, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184920.

<sup>13</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Jan. 16, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184923.

<sup>14</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Apr. 12, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184946.

<sup>15</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Apr. 12, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184946.

<sup>16</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Apr. 12, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184946.

<sup>17</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Apr. 12, 1934. reel M1025, p. 184949.

propose to achieve the new order of society, don't be specific or definite. Stick to generalities."<sup>18</sup>

Herridge's involvement in Roosevelt's New Deal had begun nearly at the start of Roosevelt's Presidency. Herridge had been asked to study the National Recovery Administration (N. R. A.) for the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.<sup>19</sup> He thought that the ideas Roosevelt and his advisors were advocating had great potential. Herridge became friends with the more radical New Dealers, such as Henry Wallace, with whom he remained friends into the 1940s. Wallace passed on his correspondence with Herridge to Roosevelt.<sup>20</sup> Grattan O'Leary, the publisher of the Ottawa Journal, wrote that Herridge "became friendly with Henry Agard Wallace, Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture, regarded even then as a bit of a radical. Wallace invited Bill Herridge to go to China with him, and Herridge, all enthusiasm, consented. Bennett heard about it, from Mildred no doubt, and put his foot down with a thump. No official of his government was traveling to China, and particularly not with anyone as radically inclined as Henry Wallace."<sup>21</sup>

Historian James Bartlet Brebner noted that many New Deal policies were talked over in advance with Herridge "in order to obtain the critical responses of an understanding, yet detached, North American."<sup>22</sup> The New Dealers flocked to the Canadian Legation. Journalist Chester Bloom, writing to John W. Dafoe, the editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*,

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<sup>18</sup> National Archives of Canada, Dafoe Papers, Grant Dexter to J.W. Dafoe, January 4, 1935.

<sup>19</sup> J. Richard Wilbur, H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 115. It turned out that he was watching all manner of New Deal departments and agencies for different parts of the Canadian Federal Government.

<sup>20</sup> Roosevelt Library, Henry Agard Wallace Papers, late 1941-1943 and in the Roosevelt Papers, where there are copies of Herridge's correspondence. It is interesting that when Herridge stayed in New York, he stayed at the Hotel Roosevelt, and it is on their letterhead that some of his letters are written.

<sup>21</sup> Grattan O'Leary, Grattan O'Leary: Recollections of People, Press, and Politics, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), p. 73.

<sup>22</sup> John Bartlet Brebner, North Atlantic Triangle: The Interplay of Canada, The United States and Great Britain, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1946), p. 308. In a note on page 308, Brebner comments on the close

wrote that "It is no secret that the Canadian Legation has been open house at all times to the New Deal crowd. On many occasions, Mr. Herridge has told me proudly of his closeness to Professor Rexford Guy Tugwell, to ... Henry A. Wallace, to Mr. Leon Henderson."<sup>23</sup> This was no exaggeration. Some of the friendships Herridge made with official Washington lasted a lifetime. He was on friendly terms with A. A. Berle and Raymond Moley, both significant architects of the New Deal. Herridge's friendships with leading figures of the Administration, helped by his sympathy for New Deal projects, provided him with a pipeline right into the White House.<sup>24</sup> Herridge was also much interested in "officials and others who normally but infrequently appear along the diplomatic horizon"; that is, "the fellows behind the scenes."<sup>25</sup> He was introduced to this side of life in Washington by Hanford MacNider, the U.S. Minister to Ottawa, and immediately appreciated its importance.<sup>26</sup>

One of those behind the scenes was Dean Acheson, an official in the Treasury Department who was not destined to remain anonymous for long. Acheson retained fond memories of his friendship with Herridge. In September 1933, Acheson accompanied Bill and Mildred to New Brunswick on a fishing trip.<sup>27</sup> It was a wonderful vacation that gave the two of them ample time to discuss the New Deal and other issues.

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relationship between Bennett and Herridge and calls it the Bennett New Deal, the origin of the charge against Bennett of "drawing a Red Herridge across the trail."

<sup>23</sup> Richard N. Kottman, Reciprocity and the North Atlantic Triangle, 1932-1938, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 92. Jan. 14, 1935. Dafoe Papers reel no, M-77.

<sup>24</sup> Hector Charlesworth, I'm Telling You: Being the Further Candid Chronicles of Hector Charlesworth, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1937), p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> John Hilliker, Canada's Department of External Affairs, vol. 1, The Early Years, 1909-1946, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), p. 160. Cited from Herridge to Skelton, June 23, 1931, Bennett Papers, reel M1025, pp. 184400-2.

<sup>26</sup> Hilliker, p. 160. Cited from Herridge to Skelton, June 23, 1931, Bennett Papers, reel M1025, pp. 184400-2.

<sup>27</sup> James Chace, Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), p. 65.

Herridge became very popular in Washington, creating an atmosphere at the Canadian Legation which was conducive to the joyous interchange of ideas. For Herridge's obituary in the *Washington Post*, Acheson wrote:

His luncheons were small, six or eight; his guests of Little Cabinet rank and never more than one from the same department or agency... Herridge's part was to stimulate conversation. At this he was a past master. He would poke fun at himself in a delightfully slow clowning manner, for his inability to grasp the current crop of rumours and leaks and make such gay nonsense of them, and of the rivalries between the Cabinet prima donnas, that his guests would take over the talk and vie with one another to make all clear... His guests would leave in good time, having had a delightful hour, pleased with their own performance and without a trace of the heavy somnolence which usually follows a diplomatic luncheon.<sup>28</sup>

An official knew that he was on the rise if he had been invited to one of the famous Herridge luncheons. On occasion he also gave interesting and informative breakfasts attended by people like Senators William Borah and Hiram Johnson.<sup>29</sup>

Mrs. Hume Wrong, the wife of Herridge's subordinate in Washington, remembers that "Ottawa never really knew the brilliant and popular man whom Washington knew so well."<sup>30</sup> When Herridge arranged Bennett's visit to Washington in April 1933, he was able to manage special treatment, including a private lunch for the Prime Minister in Roosevelt's office. Roosevelt told the press afterwards that he and Bennett were "getting on extremely well,"<sup>31</sup> while Bennett praised Roosevelt's vision and determination to end the Depression. Herridge was also able to introduce Bennett to New Dealer Raymond Moley at an exclusive

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<sup>28</sup> *Washington Post*, Sept. 1, 1961.

<sup>29</sup> O'Leary, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> Mary E. Hallett, "W. D. Herridge and the New Democracy Movement," (Queen's University: M. A. Thesis. April 1964), p. 6. Mrs. Hume Wrong was interviewed by Hallett on May 10, 1963.

<sup>31</sup> Edgar B. Nixon ed., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1969), p. 78. Press Conference, Executive Offices of the White House, April 28, 1933, 12:40 P.M.

dinner of Washington notables.<sup>32</sup> It is noteworthy that during Mackenzie King's first wartime meeting with Roosevelt in 1940, Roosevelt asked about Herridge.<sup>33</sup>

The Canadian Legation during Herridge's tenure, had a much less formal and more modest atmosphere than when the occupants had been the Masseys.<sup>34</sup> Herridge also took a more activist – some would say outrageous – view of the role of the legation. "I have conceived the purpose of this legation," he told Skelton at the end of 1933, "to be, primarily, not a liaison between the government here and at home, but an agency vested with certain independent powers; sufficient, at any rate, to enable it to act promptly and without need of consultation, in any new-arising and unfavourable situation." Herridge confidently continued: "Whether I am right or wrong in my conception of the present purpose of the Legation, I have, at any rate, acted in pursuance of my own definite views of what should be done. For it is imperative in this quickly changing situation that we move with speed and decisiveness; and we have tried to do so."<sup>35</sup> Skelton can not have liked this conception of the legation's powers, but he was a Herridge admirer nonetheless.

Bennett was not the only beneficiary of Herridge's New Deal Vision. Herridge wrote to Robert Manion, a Bennett cabinet minister, that it was the lack of publicity for the Conservative Party's earlier legislation that had to be rectified. The "splendid work we have done for four years" needed publicity.<sup>36</sup> This was part of Herridge's idea that they include their past achievements as components of a Canadian New Deal, to show that the

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<sup>32</sup> *New York Times*. 'Three Statesmen Feted as Guests of Nation.' April 26, 1933. p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> J. W. Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 1, 1939-1944, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> Hilliker, p. 160.

<sup>35</sup> Hilliker, pp. 160-1. From Herridge to Skelton, December 19, 1933, RDEA, vol. 793, file 454.

<sup>36</sup> National Archives of Canada, Manion Papers, Manion to Herridge, June 25, 1934. From MG 27, vol. 9, subject file: Personal Correspondence: Herridge, Hon. W. D. 1932-35.

government had been following the same policy all along.<sup>37</sup> He wrote Skelton saying: “We need a plan, we need no less than the means by which the people can be brought to believe in it.”<sup>38</sup> The details were left imprecise, and Skelton commented in his diary that Herridge was vague at times.<sup>39</sup>

General McNaughton, Herridge’s good friend, was involved in the proof-reading of the speeches that Herridge arranged for the New Deal broadcasts,<sup>40</sup> but McNaughton was not a serious player in the Bennett New Deal. Finlayson, however, did take on a significant role. Herridge delighted and confused him, trying out his new ideas and plans, and writing one memorandum to Finlayson in which he asked: “Have you ever meditated upon the question of when an emergency ceases to be an emergency?”<sup>41</sup> This question was central to Herridge’s understanding of the New Deal. An emergency ended when people ceased to think there was an emergency. The New Deal was to be what would now be called a major public relations campaign.

Herridge concocted a simple two-phase strategy for the enactment of the Bennett New Deal. The first was to incite the Liberals into obstructing the government and forcing an election. This would be done by attacking the principles of *laissez-faire* liberalism in a series of New Deal Radio broadcasts at the start of 1935. Phase two was to call an election and campaign on the platform of the New Deal. It was Herridge’s plan to encourage the Liberals to denounce the government during the debate on the Speech from the Throne after

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<sup>37</sup> This included Herridge’s role in National Radio Broadcasting and the precursor to the CBC. Herridge was well acquainted with Graham Spry and other proponents of national broadcasting. These men understood that Herridge’s ear was a direct route to Bennett. See Rose Potvin ed., Passion and Conviction: The Letters of Graham Spry, (Regina: University of Regina, 1992), p. 70 and p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> Michael David Swift, “R.B. Bennett and the Depression, 1930-35,” (University of New Brunswick: M. A. Thesis, Spring 1964), p. 260. Cited from Herridge to Skelton, April 12, 1934.

<sup>39</sup> National Archives of Canada, Skelton Papers, diary, January 8, 1934.

<sup>40</sup> John Swettenham, McNaughton, vol. 1, 1887-1939, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968), p. 200.

<sup>41</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Finlayson, July 25, 1934. reel M1035, pp. 184487-488.

the broadcasts and then have Bennett dissolve the House and ask the people to vote for the New Deal. The purpose, then, would not be to pass reform legislation, but “to evangelize the country.”<sup>42</sup>

The manipulation of public attitudes to engineer a certain outcome was a Herridge characteristic. He had seen the way in which Roosevelt gave himself favourable press in cooperating with certain journalists in the United States, and hoped that the same formula could be successfully used in Canada. He told Bennett:

The matter of advance publicity for the January radio addresses should be given immediate consideration. The press, or at least certain members of the Press Gallery, should get the ‘background’, so that their interpretation of the speeches may be along the lines we desire. When I consider the admirable publicity arrangements in Washington, which enable the Administration to exercise almost perfect control over the press, I realize how much we lose by our present methods.<sup>43</sup>

Certain members of the Press Gallery were given advance copies of the New Deal broadcasts before they were delivered, in an effort to maximize the impact of the occasion. The medium of radio itself was revolutionary, at least in Canada.<sup>44</sup>

The thrust behind the speeches was the pure product of Herridge’s mind. Herridge had, as we have seen, suggested the New Deal in the first place, urging Bennett for over a year to save the political situation by making a dramatic appeal to the people.<sup>45</sup> Finlayson met Herridge in the summer of 1934 at Union Station in Ottawa with a load of books on radical economics that Herridge had requested in order to prepare himself for drafting the

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<sup>42</sup> Larry A. Glassford, Reaction and Reform: The Politics of the Conservative Party Under R. B. Bennett, 1927-1938, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), Cited from Bennett Papers, vol. 276. Herridge to Bennett, 18 Jan. 1935.

<sup>43</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Dec. 20, 1934. reel M1404, p. 441560.

<sup>44</sup> Herridge was an early supporter of public broadcasting and had helped convince Bennett to set up the CRBC, what became the CBC. During the debate Herridge had accepted a bet from the Chairman of the CPR, Beatty that Bennett would pick a private system over a public system. He won \$25. Knowlton Nash, The Microphone Wars, A History of Triumph and Betrayal at the CBC, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994), p. 80.

<sup>45</sup> H. Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Prism of Unity, 1932-1939, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 86.

addresses. Finlayson had to scramble, either buying the books or borrowing them from departmental libraries. The books Herridge wanted surprised Skelton, who gave Finlayson a selection of more mainstream volumes.<sup>46</sup> These Herridge quickly rejected. Herridge and Finlayson went up to Harrington Lake with food and a case of Haig and Haig whiskey. The Minister was a formidable cook<sup>47</sup> and they ate well. They read, debated, and threshed out the issues. Finlayson later noted that: "As Bennett was about to return from Europe, Herridge handed me, as I saw him off for Washington, a somewhat bulky memorandum containing the outline of the proposed speeches."<sup>48</sup> Herridge had to return to Washington and left the speech outlines in Finlayson's hands to present to Bennett.

Bennett read the first few lines and found the word reform. He said: "Of course, I am a reformer."<sup>49</sup> Herridge came back up from Washington to go over the outlines with Bennett and took them up with the Prime Minister alone. Finlayson and Herridge knew that Bennett was friendly with T. H. Russell, the President of Massey-Harris. When Bennett asked Herridge and Finlayson to give some examples of definite, concrete proposals, they suggested nationalizing the farm-implement industry, bringing Bennett to his feet.<sup>50</sup> Finlayson was joking; Herridge might not have been.

The wording of the speeches was dramatic. Finlayson recalls Skelton's reaction, and his view that Herridge's rhetoric was replete with religiosity.

Skelton, when staying at Canada House in Washington had picked up from his bedside a reprint of Herridge's father's sermons. What impressed Skelton at the time was the similarity in the diction of the sermons he was reading and the

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<sup>46</sup> R. K. Finlayson, "Life with R.B.: That Man Bennett," Unpublished manuscript edited by J. R. H. Wilbur. R. K. Finlayson Papers. p. 253.

<sup>47</sup> Herridge had learned to cook originally as a camp cook for the Geological Survey of Canada, a summer job he had enjoyed years earlier. There is a Herridge Lake in northern Ontario that he named after himself that summer. Interview with W.R. Herridge, June 30, 2000. Dean Acheson had also worked in Northern Ontario one summer while in College.

<sup>48</sup> Finlayson, p. 255.

<sup>49</sup> Finlayson, p. 256.

<sup>50</sup> Finlayson, p. 256.



language of the son, Bill. The language of the father transmitted by the son to the clarion voice of one of the great lay sermonisers of his time - delivered to a radio audience embracing the entire population of Canada.<sup>51</sup>

Herridge spoke to the Canadian Club on December 15, 1934 in Ottawa, as a trial run for the New Deal broadcasts. It was part of the larger strategy to obtain the maximum publicity for the New Deal. Herridge was building momentum. (Bennett himself set the stage in a series of five speeches delivered at Brockville, Halifax, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, but these speeches were much more vague than Herridge's)<sup>52</sup> These speeches were much more vague than Herridge's. A group of people was invited to Herridge's Canadian Club speech, each deliberately selected. Historian Richard Wilbur comments:

On December 15, 1934, Prime Minister Bennett, Sir Robert Borden, Mackenzie King, and Chief Justice Lyman Duff were among the special guests of the Ottawa branch of the Canadian Club ... In many respects Herridge had missed his calling: he should have followed his father into the pulpit ... The depression and his marriage to Bennett's young sister Mildred gave him a unique opportunity to use his skill with words and his colourful, engaging personality. By 1934 he had become convinced that Roosevelt's brain trust had found the solution to the depression, and for the past few months he had been trying to persuade Bennett to launch a similar program.<sup>53</sup>

Larry Glassford has concluded that Herridge's real target was neither Bennett nor Borden, but another politician in attendance, Mackenzie King. He hoped to lure the cautious Liberal leader into an open defence of the status quo. "If we hang on to this idea," Herridge informed Manion, "he will be forced back into *laissez-faire*."<sup>54</sup> Herridge, the "son of the parsonage,"<sup>55</sup> told the Canadian Club:

If we looked more to spiritual leadership and less to capitalist leadership; if we made business less our religion and religion more our business; if we proclaimed by deeds the eternal truths of the Christian faith, we might find that this system did not work so badly after all ... I am well disposed towards capitalism ... but ... let us

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<sup>51</sup> Finlayson, p. 257. Pages 261 to 266 have a very readable account of the legislation that came to be the New Deal and its affects.

<sup>52</sup> Glassford, p. 154.

<sup>53</sup> J. Richard Wilbur, H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 148.

<sup>54</sup> Glassford, p. 154. Cited from Manion Papers, vol. 9, Herridge to Manion, 17 Dec. 1934.

<sup>55</sup> Berton, p. 266.

search through this system ... and see what is wrong ... The form is unimportant so long as it responds to the one true test of its effectiveness: the greatest good of the people as a whole.<sup>56</sup>

King noted Herridge's "usual intellectual arrogance and superiority," but found that the speech gave no answers to the questions it raised. His interest was piqued by the "strangeness and mystery of events."<sup>57</sup> Québec Liberal Premier Louis-Alexandre Taschereau, one of the guests, agreed with Herridge and invited him to dinner in Montreal.<sup>58</sup>

The importance of the speech was not misunderstood. McNaughton explained: "Could any speech delivered in the capital of Canada by our Minister to Washington in the presence of the Prime Minister, the members of his cabinet, the Leader of the Opposition, and others distinguished in the political, judiciary and social life of our country be without the deepest political significance?"<sup>59</sup> It seems clear that Herridge would not have given the speech without Bennett's support. It was too close to home.<sup>60</sup>

The defeat of Conservative Premier Henry in Ontario was given as further evidence that Bennett must go the way of reform. Herridge told him that the Ontario elections proved the "old Toryism is dead".<sup>61</sup> Bennett ought to "declare for the new Toryism, for it means government in business." The people wanted action, "and if government does not give it to them, action they will nevertheless have, and it will be action of their own making."<sup>62</sup> In the same vein, Herridge told him, "You are the apostle and the designated leader in the new

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<sup>56</sup> Wilbur, H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973, p. 149 Extract from the Ottawa Evening Citizen, 17 December, 1934.

<sup>57</sup> King Diary, December 15, 1934.

<sup>58</sup> New York Times. 'Cry for New Deal is Rising in Canada.' Dec. 23, 1934. p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> National Archives of Canada, McNaughton Papers, from a conversation with Sir George Schuster, noted in Memorandum Dec. 21, 1934. From vol. 105, subject file: Herridge, W. D. Vol. 2. Cdn. Legation to U. S.

<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to note that Herridge lived around the corner and down the street from Laurier House and Borden's residence. He lived at 30 Goulbourn Avenue. Roosevelt Library, Henry Agard Wallace Papers.

<sup>61</sup> Wilbur, The Bennett New Deal: Fraud or Portent? p. 70. Herridge to Bennett, June 22, 1934. Federal by-elections also proved this point.

capitalism. All your life you have been preparing for that dual role. If you step out now and smash fascism you will lift this country into a new prosperity.”<sup>63</sup> From his privileged inside position, O. D. Skelton could see Bennett swinging to the left.<sup>64</sup>

Bennett’s New Deal broadcasts came in January 1935. Bennett paid for them himself -- forty stations, five half-hour broadcasts, at a cost of \$11,000.<sup>65</sup> Even Bennett knew how out of character they might seem. “Coming out of Cabinet one day he slapped the venerable Sir George Perley on the back. ‘How are you, comrade?’ he quipped. Sir George was not amused.”<sup>66</sup> Former Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden concluded privately that, as a result of the Bennett broadcasts, the Conservative party was “animated with new-born hope of success.”<sup>67</sup> Borden knew that the speeches originated with Herridge and noted that the speeches, “advocating social and economic changes”, “largely the work of Bill Herridge”, were astonishing.<sup>68</sup> Liberal editor J.W. Dafoe believed that some of the speeches were written, at least in part, in Washington “by some of the younger doctrinaires in the Government service.”<sup>69</sup> Dafoe wanted to get proof of involvement by the Americans into print to hurt the Conservatives in the upcoming election.<sup>70</sup> Chester Bloom reported to Dafoe that Herridge during the past year had told him “he alone held the formula which

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<sup>62</sup> Wilbur, H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973. p. 136. From Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, 20 August 1934.

<sup>63</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, November 20, 1934.

<sup>64</sup> Skelton Papers, Skelton Diary, May 13, 1934.

<sup>65</sup> Glassford, p. 154. Cited from Bennett Papers, C. R. B. C to Bennett, 1 Mar. 1935.

<sup>66</sup> O’Leary, p. 77.

<sup>67</sup> Glassford, p. 156. Cited from Borden’s book, *Letters to Limbo*.

<sup>68</sup> Lester B. Pearson, Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Volume 1: 1897-1948, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 80.

<sup>69</sup> National Archives of Canada, Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to A.W. Roebuck, January 15, 1935.

<sup>70</sup> Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to Chester Bloom, January 11, 1935. He instructed Bloom to collect as much New Deal material as he could in Washington and compare it with the Herridge written speeches.

could save Mr. Bennett's political hide; that if he were allowed to manage the campaign, he could win another victory by making plenty of promises."<sup>71</sup>

Bennett's first speech on January 2, 1935, was spectacular in its effect:

The old order is gone. It will not return. We are living amidst conditions which are new and strange to us. Your prosperity demands corrections in the old system, so that, in these new conditions, that old system may adequately serve you. The time to bring about these changes has come. Further progress without them is improbable....<sup>72</sup>

Bennett declared the old capitalist system was no more and proclaimed that the time was right for action. Herridge's hortatory style is obvious.

The world is in tragic circumstances. The signs of recovery are few and doubtful. The signs of trouble are many, and they do not lessen. The world is searching pathetically for safety and prosperity. It will find them only when each nation, resolute to effect its own regeneration, will come to a meeting place with all the others, in the spirit which declares that even the most powerful among them has no real economic independence of the rest ... For if you believe that things should be left as they are, you and I hold contrary and irreconcilable views. I am for reform.<sup>73</sup>

The American influence on Herridge was apparent. American New Deal jargon such as "priming the pump"<sup>74</sup> was used. "In my mind," Bennett concluded, "reform means Government intervention. It means Government control and regulation. It means the end of *laissez-faire*."<sup>75</sup>

In his second broadcast on January 4, Bennett appealed to the discontented workers. It was a more practical speech. "I believe there should be a uniform minimum wage and a uniform maximum working week."<sup>76</sup> He also argued for unemployment insurance, health

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<sup>71</sup> Dafoe Papers, Chester Bloom to J.W. Dafoe, January 14, 1934. Bloom discovered from the publicity branches of the A.A.A. and N.R.A. that Herridge had been receiving their numerous publicity releases.

<sup>72</sup> C. P. Stacey ed., Historical Documents of Canada, Volume V: The Arts of War and Peace, 1914-1945, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972), p. 310, doc. 132. Bennett's first New Deal Broadcast, January 2, 1935.

<sup>73</sup> Stacey, Historical Documents of Canada, p. 311.

<sup>74</sup> Wilbur, The Bennett New Deal: Fraud or Portent? p. 82. Bennett's first New Deal Broadcast, January 2, 1935.

<sup>75</sup> Stacey, Historical Documents of Canada, p. 311, doc. 132. Bennett's first New Deal Broadcast, January 2, 1935.

<sup>76</sup> Stacey, Historical Documents of Canada, p. 311.

insurance, and a new more scientific old age pension plan,<sup>77</sup> the basic aspects of a social welfare state. O. D. Skelton commented in his diary that this broadcast was more Bennett's and Finlayson's style. Its economic analysis was loose, but it was more humane and effective than the first address.<sup>78</sup>

The third speech was directed towards Canada's farmers. Bennett stated his record on relief for farmers and promised more of the same. It sounded as though the Prime Minister was at war with the capitalist system.<sup>79</sup> The fourth speech was on monetary policy, Bennett singing the praises of the new Bank of Canada and promising regulation of the economy.<sup>80</sup> In the fifth and final speech, the fifth in ten days, Bennett said: "if you want no changes in the capitalist system, declare for that party."<sup>81</sup> That party was of course the Liberals. Bennett said that he planned to interfere with big business, something the Liberals would not do. The final line of the last speech promised to "reclaim this land from trouble and sorrow, and bring back happiness and security."<sup>82</sup> Herridge was absent from the revision of the last four speeches. He had obligations in Washington and was unable to be in Ottawa all of the time. This accounts for the fact the speeches were less radical than they would have been under Herridge's influence.

Nevertheless, the Press Gallery knew where the inspiration and much of the rhetoric originated. As William Marchington of the *Toronto Globe* said, "The voice on the radio is

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<sup>77</sup> Stacey, Historical Documents of Canada, pp. 312-13, doc. 132. Bennett's second New Deal Broadcast, January 4, 1935.

<sup>78</sup> Skelton Papers, Skelton Diary, January 4, 1935.

<sup>79</sup> Wilbur, The Bennett New Deal: Fraud or Portent? p. 85. Bennett's third New Deal Broadcast, January 7, 1935.

<sup>80</sup> Wilbur, The Bennett New Deal: Fraud or Portent? p. 88. Bennett's fourth New Deal Broadcast, January 9, 1935.

<sup>81</sup> Wilbur, The Bennett New Deal: Fraud or Portent? p. 89. Bennett's fifth New Deal Broadcast, January 11, 1935.

<sup>82</sup> Wilbur, The Bennett New Deal: Fraud or Portent? p.90. Bennett's fifth New Deal Broadcast, January 11, 1935.

the voice of Bennett but the hand that writes the speeches is the hand of Herridge ... Rod Finlayson is the adjutant-general while Herridge is the Prime Minister's chief of staff. He digs up the raw material ... and is consulted more ... than any member of the cabinet.<sup>83</sup> Finlayson recalled that Herridge's letters to Bennett were being used in the broadcasts. "Bennett used phrases and sometimes entire paragraphs from this correspondence without changing a word."<sup>84</sup>

Bennett did not consult his cabinet about the New Deal Broadcasts, and suspicions of Herridge in the Conservative Party circles only increased. Herridge was "the man who knew more about what was going to happen than members of the cabinet or the party Old Guard."<sup>85</sup> One of the New Deal's fiercest opponents was C. H. Cahan of Montreal, who represented the money interests of St. James Street. He threatened to resign over the New Deal broadcasts. Cahan was advised by his rich supporters to "fight it all you can C.H., but whatever you do don't leave the cabinet."<sup>86</sup>

The broadcasts were meant to be followed immediately by the Speech from the Throne. Herridge had written in December that "The speech from the throne and the New Year's message must necessarily be written in the same spirit of the speeches, I shall try to find time to draft out something for submission."<sup>87</sup> It was his belief that the "Speech from the Throne will be unique in the history of this country."<sup>88</sup> Herridge and Finlayson wrote a good draft following Herridge's suggestions and ideas. There was a portion of the speech which called for the nationalization of private hydro-electric power by the federal

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<sup>83</sup> Wilbur, *H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973*, p. 152. William Marchington in *Toronto Globe*, 3 January 1934.

<sup>84</sup> Wilbur, *H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973*, p. 152. R. K. Finlayson in an interview with the author, 6 April 1960; also see Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, 16 January, 17 February, 20 August, 11 September, 15, 20 November 1934; also Manion Papers, Herridge to Manion, 26 January 1935.

<sup>85</sup> Swettenham, p. 200. cited from the *Financial Post*, 15 July, 1939.

<sup>86</sup> Dafoe Papers, Grant Dexter to J.W. Dafoe, January 4, 1935.

<sup>87</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Dec. 20, 1934. reel M1404, p. 441560.

<sup>88</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, Dec. 20, 1934. reel M1404, p. 441560.

government, but this was too much for Bennett. Finlayson describes the scene in Bennett's parliamentary office as Herridge defended the idea, at one point even questioning Bennett's authority to draft his own speech. Bennett thereupon sent Herridge out of his office and they did not see each other again for six months.<sup>89</sup> From that point, as Finlayson describes it, the New Deal was "on the road to nowhere."<sup>90</sup>

The Throne Speech did not accomplish the objective of inciting the Liberals into a defence of the principles of *laissez-faire* liberalism. Mackenzie King was outraged by the speeches and the "effrontery of it all" and a bit discouraged by all the "make-believe" at first.<sup>91</sup> But unfortunately for Herridge, King was one step ahead of him. As the speeches continued, a strategy took form in King's mind. After Bennett's throne speech, King decided to "call the bluff on the address to vote it at once so that we can get the program of Reform before us and pass it." King demanded action and at once, in order to take the government unawares.<sup>92</sup> The Liberals invited the government to introduce its promised reforms.<sup>93</sup> This totally upset what was left of Herridge's strategy.

According to Herridge's later, almost conspiratorial, outline of his strategy: "We started off with Phase 1. It accomplished precisely what it was designed to accomplish. You will agree that it had a marked, if not revolutionary effect on the public sentiment. And at that Phase 1 had been hurriedly arranged and appropriate legislation to support it was not available. According to the predetermined plan, Phase 2 would have been launched toward the end of February."<sup>94</sup> The Conservatives never really made it to Phase 2 in the way

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<sup>89</sup> Finlayson, p. 267.

<sup>90</sup> Finlayson, p. 267.

<sup>91</sup> King Diary, January 4, 1935. King thought that the first speech came directly out of his Industry and Humanity and was an awful example of plagiarism.

<sup>92</sup> King Diary, January 15, 1935.

<sup>93</sup> Glassford, p. 160. Cited from House of Commons *Debates*, 17 Jan. 1935. pp. 3-4, 28-60.

<sup>94</sup> Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 91. Cited from Manion Papers, W. D. Herridge to R. J. Manion, May 23, 1935. See also King Diary, Feb. 27, 1935.

Herridge had hoped. Herridge's basic idea was that Parliament would sit for only a month or so, but Bennett did not immediately call an election, and tried to devise his own New Deal.

Bennett's break with Herridge during the drafting of the Throne Speech<sup>95</sup> and the subsequent failure to lure the Liberals into a defence of the status quo took their toll. Bennett also became very ill with heart problems and had barely recovered when he left for the King's Silver Jubilee celebrations in London, late in April 1935. Herridge was familiar with Bennett's piques and continued to write long letters as if nothing had happened. On March 8, 1935, he talked about the increasingly disaffected Trade and Commerce Minister Harry Stevens, and his essential part in any movement of reform:

You are the leader of a movement which has the power, if it has the will, to safely guide this country through the coming perilous years. This movement stands for progress, for the better functioning of the capitalist system, for a fairer distribution of its benefits, for social justice, for fuller individual liberty ... Stevens is naturally and necessarily a part of this movement. His support of you will ensure its success. His defection may well shatter it ... What then remains but to accept him and use him as an integral part of this movement ... I propose myself as the one who can talk to Stevens and may be able to adjust this tragically foolish situation.<sup>96</sup>

Stevens soon resigned from the government and went on to form his Reconstruction Party. Herridge's offer to reconcile Bennett and Stevens went unheeded. The days stretched into weeks and Herridge gradually lost hope for his New Deal.

Herridge wanted Bennett to dissolve parliament and go to the country for a mandate to implement the New Deal. Bennett ignored him and progressed with a hurried raft of new legislation. Writing to Manion, Herridge was very disappointed: "The Price Spreads

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<sup>95</sup> Wilbur, H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973, pp. 154-5. R. K. Finlayson to Wilbur, 9 March 1963. Bennett seems to have remained incommunicado in his hotel suite at the Chateau Laurier, from about 27 February to 18 April, sick and angry at the world and convinced that only he had the ability to lead and to make decisions.

<sup>96</sup> Wilbur, H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973, p. 155-6. Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, 8 March 1935.



legislation<sup>97</sup> will be emasculated. The Housing bill will lack utterly political significance, the public works bill will be laughed out of court." He would not "sit by and see my conception of what should rightly be done at this time wrecked because of prejudices and disabilities which have no rightful place in government or in the personnel comprising government."<sup>98</sup>

Herridge, growing more and more depressed as the weeks passed, urged Manion to intervene with Bennett. He pleaded: "But, try. Take one more furious crack at it."<sup>99</sup> But Bennett was not going to budge. Herridge mourned the loss of an idea, telling Manion, "I fear our big, beautiful reform child is almost dead."<sup>100</sup>

Herridge hated being stuck in Washington while all that he had worked for came to naught. He watched as the Canadian people forgot the Bennett New Deal: "The colour has faded from the reform picture," he wrote. "The promise of performance is gone. The prospect of achievement is forgotten. You are back once more in the same old treadmill of dreary and meaningless endeavour. A sadder sight my tortured imagination cannot suggest."<sup>101</sup> Because of his heart attack, Bennett could not be totally blamed for the failure of the New Deal. Opposition in the party and plain short-sightedness shared in the blame. Manion replied to Herridge that Bennett's illness made it impossible to guide legislation

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<sup>97</sup> The Price Spreads legislation was the result of the report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads and Mass Buying, chaired by H.H. Stevens. The Commission investigated the disparity between production costs and selling prices. It concentrated on the abuses committed by department stores, a sector that forced small producers to sell their products cheaply. Much to Bennett's annoyance, Stevens used the Commission as a pulpit, an act that created a rift between the two.

<sup>98</sup> Wilbur, *H. H. Stevens, 1878-1973*, p. 168. Manion Papers, Herridge to Manion, 23 May 1935.

<sup>99</sup> Manion Papers, Herridge to Manion, March 22, 1935. From subject file: Personal Correspondence: Herridge, Hon. W. D. 1932-35.

<sup>100</sup> Manion Papers, Herridge to Manion, March 22, 1935. From subject file: Personal Correspondence: Herridge, Hon. W. D. 1932-35.

<sup>101</sup> Manion Papers, Herridge to Manion, March 22, 1935. From subject file: Personal Correspondence: Herridge, Hon. W. D. 1932-35.

through the House.<sup>102</sup> H. H. Stevens was a problem too. With Bennett incapacitated, and then out of the country, Stevens was whispering sedition in the ears of faithful Conservatives. It was perhaps as Herridge had told Bennett: "The idea itself was what was best in the New Deal."<sup>103</sup>

Herridge in the end could not conceive that he must take some of the responsibility for the failure of the New Deal.<sup>104</sup> He wrote McNaughton that: "I believed, and still firmly believe, that with a little more smash and directness we could have done pretty big things."<sup>105</sup> "However, if I did not realize my ambition," Herridge continued, "I fully salved my conscience." His New Deal, his last contribution, which he had considered a pretty effective one, had been thrown away.<sup>106</sup> When the election campaign started in earnest in September of 1935, Herridge simply warned Bennett not to make compromises with "the old type of fat-headed, unthinking, big-business Conservatism."<sup>107</sup> But his influence had evaporated.

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<sup>102</sup> Manion Papers, Manion to Herridge, March 25, 1935. From subject file: Personal Correspondence: Herridge, Hon. W. D. 1932-35.

<sup>103</sup> Glassford, p. 143. Cited from Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, 12 April 1935.

<sup>104</sup> His exile was self-imposed. He resisted all blandishments from Ottawa to return. McNaughton Papers, vol. 105, Herridge to McNaughton, June 20, 1935.

<sup>105</sup> McNaughton Papers, vol. 105, Herridge to McNaughton, Sept. 20, 1935. From subject file: Herridge, W. D. Vol. 1. Cdn. Legation to U. S.

<sup>106</sup> This was Herridge's view of the situation. McNaughton Papers, vol. 105, Herridge to McNaughton, June 17, 1935.

<sup>107</sup> McNaughton Papers, vol. 105. Herridge to McNaughton, Sept. 20, 1935.

## CONCLUSION

Just after the appointment of Herridge as Minister to Washington in 1931, Saturday Night's E. C. Buchanan wrote of the new diplomat's privileged position in R. B. Bennett's Ottawa. Although virtually unknown in the country at large, and even in Ottawa, Herridge had the most important qualification of all – "He is held in the highest regard by the Prime Minister himself." Bennett, indeed, "attributes his elevation to the premiership in no small measure to the counsel of his friend. Major Herridge, in short, stands in much the same relationship to the Prime Minister as that which the famous Colonel House stood to President Woodrow Wilson."<sup>1</sup>

Buchanan's judgement is similar to the verdict of the historical literature. Herridge was a well connected, brilliant, courageous, and intelligent envoy and advisor.<sup>2</sup> For all his complexities, and they were many, Herridge was thought by contemporaries to be an effective representative of his country. The British High Commissioner in Ottawa, for example, wrote:

Personally I find Major Herridge a man of culture and considerable charm, handicapped by a somewhat neurotic psychology. He is a prey to moods, during which he has been in the habit of denying his company to his best friends for several weeks on end, showing great ingenuity in preventing them from making contact with him by telephone or otherwise. Such tendencies would seem rather serious drawbacks in view of the heavy social demands of diplomatic life, but on the other hand, when Major Herridge entertains he does so with excellent taste; he knows how to make himself very pleasant to his guests; and is a ready conversationalist.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Buchanan, E. C. 'National Affairs: Minister to Washington.' Saturday Night March 14, 1931, vol. 46. p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1, 10, and 13 of the Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> Hillmer, Norman and J. L. Granatstein. Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990s. Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994. p. 99.

More relevant, because it reflects a view widely-held by Washington insiders, is Dean Acheson's assessment of Herridge's diplomatic skills:

Bill Herridge was one of the ablest diplomats this country has received and in the early nineteen-thirties one of the best-known and liked men in official Washington. The first, central, and all important fact about Herridge was his vitality. It poured out of him, sometimes as ideas tumbling over one another, sometimes as gaiety, or as physical activity -- he was a great fisherman and camper -- or as host and conversationalist, or pretty wild political schemer. Whatever he did was done with verve and often with a good deal of noise.<sup>4</sup>

Herridge had important connections to the top people, and valuable contacts with those further down the political and bureaucratic ladder. He was seen in the right places. He charmed, and so too did wife Mildred. He entertained at the Legation, attracting Washington's best and brightest: it was a compliment to get a Herridge invitation. And he spoke effectively from the public platform as the official representative of Canada. As Buchanan said, he had the makings of "a stirring evangelist,"<sup>5</sup> and it showed in his speaking and rhetoric.

But Herridge cannot be considered simply by the ordinary standards of diplomats. He was the Prime Minister's brother-in-law, a political confidante, who was very frequently in Ottawa, rather than in Washington.<sup>6</sup> His role as Minister was thus indistinguishable from that of advisor. He had, moreover, an agenda which allows for a judgement about his relative success or failure. The Seaway and a freer trade deal were ambitions that fell within his direct responsibility as Minister. The New Deal was a programme he took from his American experience and tried to impose on Canada. In each of these three areas, his goal was to reform an economic and political system that he

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<sup>4</sup> Acheson, Dean. *Morning and Noon*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965. p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> Buchanan, E. C. 'National Affairs: Minister to Washington.' *Saturday Night* March 14, 1931, vol. 46. p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Vining, Charles. *Bigwigs: Canadians Wise and Otherwise*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1935. p. 71.

regarded as creaking towards disaster. In each of these areas, there were partisan points to score and huge political victories to win. In each of these areas, Herridge did not succeed.

In the case of the Seaway, Herridge attempted to help Canadian farmers in the west by providing an alternate outlet to world markets, especially for wheat. He successfully negotiated a treaty with Hoover's State Department officials, achieving most of his goals. But the Seaway treaty did not pass the test of the American Senate, which would not ratify it. Herridge was behind the Canadian effort to obtain a freer trade agreement with Washington. The nationalist-protectionist reached for the American market for political and economic advantage. He promoted the New Deal as a strategy to win another election. His experience in Washington had left him with the impression that the Roosevelt New Deal was largely public relations; despite this, it had worked on a psychological level to improve the situation in the U.S. He wrote Bennett's New Deal speeches, and gave Bennett direction, but it all fell apart as the Conservative government failed to deliver the elements Herridge thought crucial.

The three plans did not fail, in truth, just because of Herridge. The Seaway Treaty stalled, in part, because of Hoover's defeat and Roosevelt's ambivalence to the project once he was in harness. It was seen as a Hoover initiative, and Roosevelt had little to gain from it. The amount of time taken from signing to the ratification attempt in the Senate allowed interest groups opposed to the Treaty, including the railways, Atlantic ports, and proponents of an all American route, to coalesce and apply pressure on the Senate and the President. It looked like too good a deal for Canada. On reciprocity, Canada really had nothing special to offer, and hoped-for American concessions would

hurt U.S. domestic producers of certain commodities. Besides, as the Bennett Government's tenure neared its end, the State Department was secretly conversing with Mackenzie King, who was promising a better deal. The New Deal, too, was affected by several factors beyond Herridge's control. Bennett became ill, and he was at any rate not in a strong position to implement legislation; and Mackenzie King was too clever to be lured in by Bennett's unsubtle tactics.

Yet Herridge's role in the failure of the three initiatives is important. He was over-enthusiastic in his expectations and rhetoric. He had a hard time keeping a secret and before long, rumours were swarming all around him. He was often over-aggressive in negotiation. For the Seaway Treaty, Herridge did not read the politics of the United States effectively. In 1932, when the Treaty was signed, he did not have an adequate understanding of the dynamic between the President and Congress. This was especially true after President Herbert Hoover was defeated in 1932 by Roosevelt. Herridge was, as well, too forceful in his reciprocity initiative. The arch-nationalist had alienated key members of the State Department who did not quite believe him on the trade issue. In the case of the Bennett New Deal, Herridge overreached himself with Bennett. He forgot who was Prime Minister and who was the advisor. The entire blame cannot be laid on Herridge, however. Herridge's success was restricted by the tough economic times and the difficulties that Canada has always had in negotiating with country far more powerful.

Much of Herridge's life after Bennett's defeat in 1935 was difficult and even tragic. Following the election, Herridge resigned his post in Washington.<sup>7</sup> He returned to the law, and dabbled in politics at times, including his initiative as founder of the New

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<sup>7</sup> Bennett Papers, Herridge to Skelton, Oct. 16, 1935. reel M1024, p. 183283. King Diary, October 15, 1935, King wanted Herridge out of Washington quickly.

Democracy Movement right before the Second World War. On May 12, 1938 he lost his wife Mildred, who died after a fairly long illness.<sup>8</sup> In April 1938, his brother-in-law Bennett had resigned as Conservative Party leader.<sup>9</sup> Bennett was actually hoping to be drafted by the Conservative leadership convention to return as leader, but it did not happen. On July 7 1938, Herridge stood up before the Conservative convention and gave a speech on the need for reform; he was heckled by the crowd and booed for touting Bennett's re-election as leader.<sup>10</sup> It was a typical Herridge moment: full of bluster and eloquence, overblown in its expectations, and doomed to failure. The party rejected him and Bennett's baggage. Without Bennett, Herridge did not really fit into the Conservative Party. He had always been more of a Progressive, interested in reform, and prophetically, the Seaway, Reciprocity, and many of the New Deal ideas, were eventually adopted by the Liberals.<sup>11</sup> The Ship of State was on rough seas during the Great Depression. Herridge left his mark at the helm, striving to guide the ship through the storm.

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<sup>8</sup> *New York Times*, May 13, 1938. Mildred died on the 12<sup>th</sup>, in New York. Herridge himself did not die until September 21, 1961, in Ottawa at the age of 73. *Globe and Mail*, September 22, 1961.

<sup>9</sup> Glassford, Larry. Reaction and Reform: The Politics of the Conservative Party Under R. B. Bennett, 1927-1938. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. p. 214.

<sup>10</sup> Remembering his old friend Herridge, Bennett, living in retirement in England as a Viscount, years later named a stray dog he took in "Bill." Waite, P. B. The Loner: Three Sketches of the Personal Life and Ideas of R. B. Bennett, 1870-1947. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. p. 88. Bennett and Herridge continued to correspond until Bennett's death in 1947, but it was not the same with Mildred gone. Bennett did maintain a lively interest in the progress of Herridge and Mildred's son, William. Bennett Papers, Herridge to Bennett, 1937-47, reel M-3152. pp. 562056-562247. Interview with W. R. Herridge, June 30, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> The Conservative Party remained in opposition from 1935 until John Diefenbaker's victory in 1957.

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