

Western University
Scholarship@Western

History Publications

History Department

2009

A.D.P. Heeney: The Orderly Under-Secretary, 1949-1952

Francine McKenzie

The University of Western Ontario

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/historypub>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Citation of this paper:

McKenzie, Francine, "A.D.P. Heeney: The Orderly Under-Secretary, 1949-1952" (2009). *History Publications*. 384.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/historypub/384>

A.D.P. HEENEY: THE ORDERLY UNDER-SECRETARY, 1949-1952

Francine McKenzie
Department of History
University of Western Ontario

Abstract: A.D.P. Heeneey was under-secretary of the department of external affairs from 1949-1952. When he became under-secretary, the department was under strain. It had grown rapidly in size and scope in the 1940s, but it did not function smoothly. Heeneey excelled at administration. During his term, he established new divisions and sections, overhauled the administrative systems of the department, increased communication, and improved work conditions for employees. Heeneey also had definite views about the substance of foreign policy and the conduct of Canadian diplomacy. He believed that trade was a vital component of foreign policy. And he believed that the best way to conduct relations with the US was through quiet diplomacy, an approach that fell out of favour as anti-American sentiment swelled in Canada in the 1960s. Although he had a long-term influence on the development of the department, he was more of a renovator than an architect.

Arnold Heeneey belonged to the cohort of famed Ottawa Men of the 1940s and 1950s. Although he is less well known than some of his contemporaries, such as Lester Pearson, Norman Robertson, Hume Wrong and Escott Reid – certainly historians refer to him less often – he too made an important and lasting contribution to the department of external affairs. While he was under-secretary (1949-1952) the department was characterized by a common sense of purpose, confidence in the talent of Canada's diplomats, determination to engage in foreign policy on a global scale, urgency about the stakes involved, and a frenzied pace of work. The department was also a fertile source of ideas about Canada's aims and interests in world affairs, as well as issues related to the postwar, and Cold War, world. But Heeneey understood that for all of its strengths and vitality, it suffered from inefficient organization which undermined the realization of Canadian foreign policy and offset the skill of Canada's diplomats. Heeneey brought impressive administrative and organizational talents to the department, long overdue qualities in an under-secretary. The fact that Heeneey came to the department from outside was also significant to the work he did in the department. He had worked in the prime minister's office and the privy council office for over ten years before moving to the department of external affairs. This experience shaped his priorities as an administrator and sharpened his skills. But perhaps most important of all, it permitted him

to envision a different kind of department from the one that had been nurtured under O.D. Skelton.

Background and Early Life:

In 1902, Britain barely squeaked out a victory in the Anglo-Afrikaner war, Queen Victoria's long and glorious reign came to an end, and the Anglo-Japanese alliance was negotiated to offset the gap between Britain's global commitments and over-stretched resources. Although the sun was beginning to set on the British empire, it was into a British world that Heeney was born that same year. The son of an Anglican minister – Bertal Heeney - and Eva Holland, the daughter of an Anglo-Montreal merchant, Heeney recorded in his memoirs, 'from the very first I was surrounded by British influences.'¹ His childhood was steeped in British heroes, history, values and the adventure stories of G.A. Henty. In 1909, the family moved to Winnipeg where his father became the rector for St Luke's parish. Heeney's immersion in the British world was reinforced at St. John's College school: the academic culture there was one of rugged intellectualism with rugby and hockey being the principal games.² In 1918, Heeney attended the University of Manitoba where he studied English and French languages and literatures. He attained a high level of fluency and sports remained a priority. He recollected being 'quite disproportionately proud' to be captain of the football team in his final year. He hoped to attend Oxford and he applied for a Rhodes scholarship in 1921. His first application was not successful. Instead, he studied for an M.A. in English at the University of Manitoba – his choice of thesis topic, on the poetry of Rupert Brooke, comes as no surprise – and took up a position of a junior master at his old school, St John's. He was named a Rhodes scholar for Manitoba the next year.

I am grateful to John Hilliker for reading a draft of this paper. Mike Aloissi provided helpful research assistance, for which I am also grateful.

¹ A.D.P. Heeney, *The things that are Caesar's: Memoirs of a Canadian public servant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 7.

² As Jack Granatstein notes, the ethos at St. John's was a bit 'too much [that] of the *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.' J.L. Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins 1935-1957* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982), 190-1. Heeney himself wrote that the school 'owed more to Rugby and the tradition of Thomas Arnold than any other source'. *Caesar*, p. 8.

Although many Canadians in Oxford initially experienced a sense of cultural dislocation, Heeney fit right in: ‘from the beginning I had a sense of belonging’.³ As was typical of Rhodes scholars then, and which Oxford culture celebrated, he devoted himself to sports (rugby and rowing) and society (the King Charles Dining Club, the Raleigh Club⁴, and the Colonial Club). He met many interesting people, some of whom he would later work with in the department of external affairs. Like many a Canadian student, he was selected to play on the Blues ice hockey team which afforded opportunities to travel on the continent. Academics were not the first priority for Heeney, or for the university. As the provost of Oriel college put it in 1914: ‘show me a researcher and I will show you a fool.’ Oxford’s curriculum was traditional and disdainful of new subjects of study.⁵ Heeney’s college was St. John’s, not one of the leading academic colleges at the time, but he studied modern history, a subject that was taken seriously. However he admitted in letters home that it was not easy to buckle down to study: ‘I like my work when I am at it; it’s the initial effort that causes all the trouble.’⁶ He earned a respectable second class standing, a result that suggested he had a solid mind but not a sparkling one. Although Oxford was an enchanted enclave, Heeney spent some time reflecting on the world beyond the spires, for instance during the English general strike of 1926, although unlike Norman Robertson, his classmate

³ Heeney, *Caesar*, 15

⁴ Clyde Sanger explained that the Raleigh Club met to discuss the ‘politics of the British Commonwealth’ and he noted that the club favoured the centrality of Britain and its dominance over the dominions, in contrast to the Oh Canada! Club. *Malcolm MacDonald: Bringing an End to Empire* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), 44.

⁵ As Noel Annan, the British intellectual historian, explained, ‘No one asked the subjects studied to be relevant or of practical use.’ He also observed that while at Oxford people ‘made friends who might be important to you later in life.’ Heeney met Robertson, Graham Spry, Norman Young, John Lowe, Henry Borden, Thomas A Wilson. *The Dons: Mentors, Eccentrics and Geniuses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 135-7.

⁶ Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men*, 192.

and roommate, Heeney supported the government.⁷ For the handsome, polished, popular and well-dressed Arnold (Robertson declared that Heeney was ‘quite the most prosperous looking Rhodes scholar’⁸), his Oxford stint was idyllic.

Despite being steeped in the English part of Canada⁹ and having studied in England, Heeney was assured of his Canadian identity. Growing up in Winnipeg in the early 20th century contributed to the easy balance he struck between appreciation of all things English and a confident sense of purpose and destiny for an independent Canada.¹⁰ As he put it, ‘Of this gospel John W. Dafoe was the prophet and the *Manitoba Free Press* the inspired word.’¹¹ Direct exposure to the British mother-country did not dilute his national identity. He recorded in his diary while in Oxford: ‘No fear that I have turned Englander. I am as much a Canadian as ever whether this is to my credit or no.’¹²

Heeney returned to Canada to study law. He married Margaret Yuile – a student in the history class he taught at McGill - and soon joined the law firm of Meredith, Holden, Heward & Holden in Montreal. He continued to move in elite circles, particularly in Anglo-Montreal; his social circle included F.R. Scott, Eugene Forsey, Doug Abbott and Brooke Claxton. He also made some important connections with French Quebeckers. For instance he was a junior lawyer on a file with Louis St Laurent, one of the legal titans in Quebec. By the mid-1930s, Heeney was well-established as a lawyer, a lecturer in the law faculty at McGill, enjoyed interesting professional opportunities (for instance as counsel to the Quebec

⁷ Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men*, 193. Granatstein also noted that Heeney supported the side of law and order in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1917. Granatstein noted that one could forgive Heeney his views, based on his youth. But a decade later, he still inclined to order.

⁸ J.L. Granatstein, *A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft* (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981), 16-17.

⁹ Heeney wrote in his memoirs that his family visits to Montreal were thoroughly English. *Caesar*, 11.

¹⁰ *Caesar*, 7, 12.

¹¹ *Caesar*, 14

¹² Quoted in Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men*, 193.

Protestant Education Survey), earned a good income, and his family was growing. But he was restless and sought out other opportunities.

Into Government Service:

Family connections helped him to find a new career path. His father was a friend of Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Through his father, Arnold had met the prime minister in 1936; he had made a point of telling the prime minister that he was attracted to public service.¹³ King had been impressed with the young Heeney and took note. In 1937, Cannon Heeney subsequently lobbied for a government appointment for Arnold, such as counsel to the commission then studying dominion-provincial relations.¹⁴ Heeney followed up with a letter to the prime minister, ostensibly to apologize for the excessive enthusiasm of his father. However, he admitted that he would be pleased to be considered for exactly the kind of appointment his father had proposed: ‘there is no work in which I would sooner be engaged than that of the Commission, which I feel will be a land mark in the history of our country.’¹⁵ Nothing came of it, however.

But the next year, King proposed that Heeney should become his own principal secretary. King explained that the role Heeney would fill was comparable to that of Maurice Hankey, the British civil servant who brought order to the British cabinet during the First World War.¹⁶ Coincidentally, Heeney had heard Hankey speak on cabinet procedure at the Colonial Club in Oxford in 1925. Hankey’s role appealed. After some hesitation, he accepted the offer and he and his family relocated to Ottawa.

His decision to change careers permits some reflection on Heeney’s character. First, when he corresponded with his father about the pros and cons of the prime minister’s offer, he admitted to having a second class mind. As he put it, his thoughts were ‘too deliberate and

¹³ Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men*, 195.

¹⁴ King to Cannon Heeney, 27 Sept 1937, vol. 1, file 1, Heeney Papers, MG30 E144, LAC.

¹⁵ ADPH to King, 4 Oct. 1937, vol. 1, file 1, Heeney Papers.

¹⁶ See Hankey’s entry in the Oxford DNB for a summary of his work and legacy in the organization of the British government: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33683>.

rather ponderous rather than rapid and intense'.¹⁷ Cannon Heeney's response was that of a typical parent: he believed his son's abilities were great. Yet he added, 'Without agreeing with that utterance...your strength is your character.'¹⁸ Heeney was not an intellectual. His intelligence showed itself in practical matters rather than in concepts or abstraction. Second, he was certain that he could do great work. Heeney's career path was driven by ambition to be in important posts where his judgment would count, along with concerns about prestige and income. Third, he naturally inclined to civil service. Although his position as principal secretary to the prime minister was a political appointment, he was not interested in partisan work, a view he made known to the prime minister.¹⁹ Finally, his hesitation in accepting the offer revealed his aversion to risk and uncertainty. He wrote to the prime minister outlining what he believed his position entailed – in effect setting conditions for his employment. This was bold. And he fretted about what position might await him in the event of a change in government – under which circumstances he would lose his job in the PMO. King agreed that he would take up a permanent position in the civil service to protect against such risk.²⁰ Heeney was intelligent, confident, even brazen, well-connected, plain-speaking, ambitious, good at thinking through long term implications, controlling, and with a natural affinity for the work he was about to undertake.

Heeney's early duties in the Prime Minister's Office were to prepare the prime minister for cabinet meetings, consult with other government departments, and write press releases and speeches.²¹ He was not able to improve the workings of government until 1940

¹⁷ ADPH to Bertal Heeney, letter, 1 Feb. 1939, vol. 15, file 10, Heeney Papers.

¹⁸ Bertal Heeney to ADPH, 29 August 1938, vol. 1, file 3, Heeney Papers.

¹⁹ Granatstein claims Heeney was about to give in to King's pressure to play a partisan role because he believed it was necessary to secure his appointment as Clerk of the Privy Council. *The Ottawa Men*, 201. In the end, he managed to avoid working for the Liberal Party.

²⁰ Skelton had agreed that Heeney could take a position as first secretary in DEA. The rank mattered because of the salary.

²¹ Brian Masschaele, 'Memos and Minutes: Arnold Heeney, the Cabinet War Committee, and the Establishment of a Canadian Cabinet Secretariat During the Second World War, *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998): 156.

when he became both clerk of the privy council and secretary to the cabinet. At this time, there were still no agendas for cabinet meetings; no minutes were kept; no conclusions on policy issues were recorded.²² Heeney knew this unstructured approach had to change in two basic ways. Records had to be kept and information had to be disseminated. The onset of the Second World War made reform urgent if the government was to meet the increased volume and pace of work efficiently. The importance of preparing for meetings, such as through the advance circulation of memoranda, recording decisions for future reference, and following through by communicating the conclusions to those interested and affected, might seem self-evident but these were novel, even radical changes, and Mackenzie King resisted them because they constrained his latitude and subtracted from his power. For instance, if cabinet meetings followed agendas, then the prime minister could not dictate what was and was not discussed.²³ Circulating agendas before meetings also gave ministers time to consider their positions more fully than would otherwise have been the case.²⁴ Taking minutes meant that there was a record of conclusions and no one had to depend on the prime minister's recollection.²⁵ Heeney's transformation of the business of government was impressive, particularly as he was able to persuade the prime minister that wartime innovations should persist in peacetime. As Jack Granatstein concluded, 'Almost single-

²² A.D.P. Heeney, 'Cabinet Government in Canada: Some Recent Developments in the Machinery of the Central Executive', *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Aug. 1946): 285.

²³ Gordon Robertson explained how the disorganized system reinforced the power of the prime minister but was not the way 'for a collective executive to reach decisions for which all would share responsibility.' *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant: Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 76. However, once agendas were introduced, King did not always stick to them, to the frustration of Heeney. Masschaele, 'Memos and Minutes', 162.

²⁴ Masschaele makes this useful observation about Hankey's reforms to British cabinet practice. It applies equally to Canada. 'Memos and Minutes', 150-1.

²⁵ Robertson, *Memoirs*, 76-7.

handedly Heeney had carried the Canadian government into the modern era.²⁶ Heeney had also discovered his calling: he was an organization man.

To the Department of External Affairs:

As clerk of the privy council and secretary to the cabinet, the scope of Heeney's activities was impressively broad: his portfolio spanned housing to wartime loans to Britain. Heeney was a skilful generalist, of the type that was particularly valuable as government work exploded.²⁷ He was involved in many matters of foreign policy and foreign relations which brought him into contact with O.D. Skelton and Norman Robertson, two of his predecessors as under-secretary. But there were few indications that he was especially interested in Canada's burgeoning international affairs. His move from the PMO/PCO to DEA in 1949 stemmed primarily from his ambition to progress in his career and his abhorrence of personal risk. Also, the DEA needed someone with Heeney's skills.

When the DEA was first established in 1909, its goal was efficiency rather than policy-making. It had gradually assumed a more proactive policy role, linked to Canada's overall decolonization, to which control over external policy was critical.²⁸ O.D. Skelton, for whom national independence was a foreign policy priority, had steered the department to a more far-reaching policy function, although he did so with a small staff, few foreign service officers, and a limited budget. By the start of the Second World War, there were approximately 200 department employees (including stenographers, translators, clerks and people in the passport office), representation in seven countries (Britain, the United States,

²⁶ Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men*, 207. Heeney's efforts have been widely praised. See Robertson, *Memoirs*, 76-77; John Hilliker, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume I: The Early Years, 1909-1946* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 195.

²⁷ Heeney talked about the importance of bureaucrats who were generalists in a speech he gave at United College, Winnipeg, 'The Universities and the Public Service', 9 Nov. 1951, *Statements and Speeches*, 51/43.

²⁸ Francine McKenzie, "Coming of Age: Independence and Foreign Policy in Canada and Australia, 1931-45" in *Parties Long Estranged: Canada and Australia in the Twentieth Century*, eds Margaret MacMillan and Francine McKenzie (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003), 34-61.

France, Switzerland, Japan, Belgium, and the Netherlands), and a budget of just over \$1 million. The department expanded rapidly during the war. The demands of postwar reconstruction did not ease the work of the department. As a result, growth continued. In 1951, Canada had 49 offices abroad, the department of external affairs had 1353 employees, and the budget was just over \$10 million.²⁹ The organization of the department had not kept up with the growth. The result was strain and inefficiency.

Heeney's predecessors as under-secretary had not paid particular attention to the organization of the department. Skelton was neither adept at nor interested in administration. He was also too over-worked, in part because of inefficient organization, to think about administration. Lester Pearson had complained about the need to 'pull... External Affairs and the Foreign Service apart and put... it back together again', but he regretted that Skelton had 'no inclination' to oversee a restructuring of the department.³⁰ Norman Robertson was notoriously disorganized: the inefficiencies of the department could not be fixed by an under-secretary who lost memos in the detritus of his desk (some said he did this deliberately). As Hugh Keenleyside observed, Robertson thought about administration as he did his clothing: 'something that was there and was useful but hardly worth any great or continuous attention.'³¹ In fact, Robertson did recognize that the department was not functioning smoothly. Hume Wrong and Hugh Keenleyside drafted proposals to improve the efficiency of the department. In 1941, Keenleyside's version was partially implemented: four divisions were established: Diplomatic & Economic; Commonwealth & European; American & Far Eastern; and Legal. But the divisions reflected the interests and expertise of senior foreign service officers (Beaudry, Pearson, Keenleyside and Read). The structure and scope of the department therefore remained highly personalized and idiosyncratic. Despite the creation of additional subdivisions (called sections), an artificial separation between geography and

²⁹ House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs, 4 April 1952, p. 11 and 8 April 1952, p. 31.

³⁰ Quoted in Hilliker, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume I*, 193.

³¹ Hugh Keenleyside, *Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside: Volume 2, On the Bridge of Time* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 117.

function persisted and some matters were dealt with in a piecemeal fashion.³² Lester Pearson replaced Robertson as USSEA and he was also mainly interested in diplomacy. As Heeney wrote of his friend, Pearson had neither time nor taste for administration.³³ Despite chronic complaints about poor organization and the widespread recognition that the business of Canada's external policy suffered as a result, the department remained set in its ways.

Heeney's accession to the under-secretary's position also occurred at a time when confidence in Canada's importance in world affairs soared. As John Holmes put it, Canada metamorphosed from 'a wartime junior partner...to...a sure-footed middle power with an acknowledged and applauded rôle in world affairs'.³⁴ The senior mandarins in Ottawa spurned the colonial mentality³⁵ of the past and moved confidently in international policymaking circles, where connections forged at Oxford sometimes proved useful. They assumed a prominent role in international councils such as the United Nations. They affirmed Canada's independent standing in world affairs, not by focusing on issues of status but rather on questions of substance, such as the workings of the postwar international economic order, the structure and purpose of the United Nations, and the treatment of refugees after the war. Outside observers appreciated that Canada's DEA was on the move. James Meade was a British civil servant who specialized in the reconstruction of postwar economic institutions; his work brought him into contact with many Canadian officials. He came to admire Canada's mandarins: 'the young men who are up and coming in the Canadian public service are very definite radicals and progressives....they are impatient to

³² Hilliker, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume I*, 243.

³³ Heeney, *Caesar*, 98.

³⁴ John W. Holmes, *The Better Part of Valour: Essays on Canadian Diplomacy* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 5.

³⁵ Holmes referred to Canada's lingering colonial mentality in *The Better Part of Valour*, 5. Escott Reid wrote a memo in 1944 about how to remove the symbols of Canada's former colonial status: 'Twenty-Four Point Draft Programme for the Abolition of the Vestigial Remnants of Canada's Former Status of Colonial Subordination and for the Creation of Appropriate Symbols of Canadian Nationhood', 21 March 1944, Reid Papers: LAC.

see that there is a very definite advance in Canada.’³⁶ Charles Ritchie also conveyed the feeling of importance that prevailed in Ottawa and the DEA in the early 1950s when he observed –disapprovingly - that ‘almost any man in official Ottawa would rather talk to a Cabinet Minister than to the most beautiful woman in the room’.³⁷

By the time Heeney joined the department, its organization had improved slightly, but rapid growth and an ever-broadening scope for Canada’s involvement in world affairs, meant that inefficiencies and disorganization persisted, badly affecting department morale. Charles Ritchie lamented that department officers and staff were over-worked to the point of exhaustion. He also lamented that the department culture celebrated overwork: ‘There is an underlying assumption that anyone who is not overworked, underpaid, eye-strained, joy-starved – in fact, not a senior civil servant – is frivolous or materialistic, that these are the hallmarks of a higher calling, the stigmata of the faithful.’³⁸ Heeney recognized that the staff and foreign service officers were strained and this undermined the work of the department. As Heeney wrote on the eve of his term as under-secretary, ‘I am in no doubt that the atmosphere in the Department and the confidence among the senior officers are not what they should be.’³⁹ Administrative skill had become the top requirement for the under-secretary. Lester Pearson, by then secretary of state, therefore selected Heeney, who was well known for his administrative talents.

There were critics of Heeney’s appointment. Some senior diplomats preferred to recruit from within for the top department post.⁴⁰ Certainly, Heeney was not particularly

³⁶ Meade diary, 24 Oct. 1943, LSE archives.

³⁷ Charles Ritchie, *Diplomatic Passport: More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1946-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), 20 May 1952, 53.

³⁸ Ritchie, *Diplomatic Passport*, 21 May 1951, 46. To Ritchie, there was something contemptible in a person who ‘so mismanage[s] his life as to be totally immersed in office work’.

³⁹ ADPH to Robertson, 16 Feb. 1949, vol. 1, file 8, Heeney Papers.

⁴⁰ Escott Reid had been the acting under-secretary and admitted in his memoirs that he would have liked to stay on. If not himself, then his clear preference was for Wrong to fill the post: ‘he would

knowledgeable about world affairs. He went through a crash course in diplomacy, tutored by close friends and senior DEA officers like Escott Reid, as well as real world events like the Berlin blockade and the war in Korea. Despite the pressure and urgency of international developments stemming from a Cold War that was growing dangerously hot, his priority was to bring order to the department. Although most officials believed policy work was more ‘stimulating and prestigious’ than figuring out how to manage the department, Heeney believed that ‘firm, decisive, and prompt action in such affairs as departmental organization at home, recruiting, training, and perhaps most of all, suitable manning of our posts abroad, was of immediate, and in some cases of first, importance.’⁴¹

One of Heeney’s first steps was to enlarge the senior management of the department so that work could be better distributed.⁴² He created the position of deputy under secretary and added one more assistant under-secretary position, bringing the total to three. The responsibilities of the senior officials combined region and function and gave them broad oversight. For instance, Charles Ritchie was responsible for four divisions, two involving liaison with the department of national defence, Europe, and Information. Jules Léger was responsible for the Latin American component of the American/Far East division, as well as the Commonwealth, Consular, Protocol, and Supplies and Properties divisions. The delegation of responsibility freed up the under secretary for overall coordination of departmental activity and consultation with the minister. And as Heeney considered how to make the divisions function more effectively, he first considered the work they had to undertake and second which officers should be assigned to them. This meant that substantive

have been the best of all the under-secretaries in the fifties and sixties’. *Radical Mandarin: The Memoirs of Escott Reid* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 243.

⁴¹ Heeney, *Caesar*, 99.

⁴² I am indebted to John Hilliker and Donald Barry who explained this work in *Canada’s Department of External Affairs: Volume II: Coming of Age, 1946-1968* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995). Many of the changes and additions resembled the blueprint drawn up by Hugh Keenleyside during the war. Keenleyside had consulted with Heeney about his proposal and noted that Heeney had approved of the changes. Keenleyside, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, 116.

foreign policy and foreign relations issues determined the structure and composition of department rather than the interests, expertise and inclination of Canadian diplomats.

Heeney also oversaw the enlargement and reordering of those divisions responsible for administration related to foreign affairs. With the creation of a far-reaching international order after the war, Canada found itself a member of many organizations, all involving meetings and conferences. In 1949 alone, Canada sent representatives to over 125 conferences. The International Conference Section was set up to deal with the voluminous and detailed planning involved in participation in international conferences. The administration of the department itself also had to improve. The Administrative Division was therefore divided into three sections: Finance, Establishments and Organization, Supplies and Properties. And the personnel division was given a broader mandate and a larger staff. It was also headed by Marcel Cadieux, a diplomat of the first rank who became under-secretary in the 1960s.

Heeney believed that foreign reporting was one of the most important activities of the diplomatic corps because the information relayed and analysed from London, Karachi, or Tokyo became the basis for actual policies.⁴³ He was taken to task in his appearances before the House of Commons standing committee on external affairs for the large telephone bills of the department.⁴⁴ But increased communication between the outposts and the centre was, in Heeney's mind, a much needed improvement. Information did not just need to be collected; it had to be communicated. Weekly digests of the principal policy issues confronting the department were sent to officials posted abroad so that they could better understand the full scope of Canadian foreign policy as well as the broader context in which their mission fell. The summary was also circulated internally and was particularly helpful to officials working in administrative sections.⁴⁵ Heeney himself took intermittent charge of individual divisions

⁴³ 'The Conduct of Canadian Diplomacy', Address by Heeney to Canadian Club, Toronto, 30 Jan. 1950, *Statements and Speeches*, 50/2. House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, 22 Nov. 1949.

⁴⁴ House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs, minutes, 28 May 1951, 72.

⁴⁵ Hilliker and Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs*, Vol. 2, 52.

so that he could better understand their work and challenges. He held more meetings so that information could be communicated and ideas discussed. Institutional memory through accurate and comprehensive record keeping was also crucial. To serve this role, the Directorate of Historical Research and Reports was set up at the end of 1950: it consisted of a library, press clipping service, and archives.

His views about communication were not limited to intra-departmental exchanges. A Press Office was set up in 1950 to respond to questions from the media. Spreading information about Canada around the world was another important diplomatic function. This could take the form of high level meetings with government officials as well as more grassroots events, such as speaking to a Kiwanis Club in Connecticut.⁴⁶ Wide distribution of ministerial speeches at home and abroad also helped.

Heeney appreciated that the work environment as well as conditions of work had an impact on the effectiveness of diplomats. Although many thought of a career in the foreign service as a calling, Heeney understood it was also a job which placed serious strains on individuals and families. Diplomats and their families endured ‘endless and exhausting problems of housing and schooling and the thousand and one personal difficulties involved in adaptation to new and often strange ways of life.’⁴⁷ He wanted to improve the conditions of work for Canadian officials abroad. In 1950 he spent five weeks touring Canadian missions to gather first hand knowledge of work conditions. His diaries reveal the close attention he paid to furnishings, heating, equipment, the grounds, and staffing.⁴⁸ Upon his return, he set up an advisory committee on ‘mission housekeeping’ to deal with the management and maintenance of offices abroad.⁴⁹ Issues of salary and allowances, to which he paid close attention during his own career, was a broader concern within the department. Three new

⁴⁶ ‘The Conduct of Canadian Diplomacy’, Address by Heeney.

⁴⁷ ‘The Conduct of Canadian Diplomacy’, Address by Heeney.

⁴⁸ A.D.P. Heeney, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, diary, vol. 2, file 20, Heeney papers.

⁴⁹ Heeney, *Caesar*, 99.

FSO grades were added, creating more opportunities for promotion and, along with it, higher pay.

Under Heeneey's guidance, the department of external affairs did not grow. Rather he used existing resources to reorganize the department. The highly personalized system that had developed under Skelton yielded to a system of efficiency, systematization, and routine.⁵⁰ Instead of having an administrative logic that stemmed from the talents, inclinations, and effort of the under-secretary and senior officers, he embedded organizational practices that would persist regardless of changes in personnel. The scope and activities of the department did not stem from the beliefs, priorities or expertise of individual members of the diplomatic corps, but from the realities of global geopolitics in the early years of the Cold War. As John Hilliker has pointed out, some members of the department resented these changes because they made the department more formal and more like other departments.⁵¹

The relationship between Heeneey and Lester Pearson, a close friend and now his boss, is less easy to gauge. Traditionally, the under-secretary was also the main policy adviser to the minister of the department. Wilfrid Laurier had counted on Sir Joseph Pope for guidance, as Carmen Miller discusses in his chapter. Mackenzie King had relied on the advice of Skelton and, after his death in 1941, Norman Robertson. Indeed, Mackenzie King would only consult with the under-secretary which made the workload almost unbearable, particularly because of King's tendency to micro-manage the department.⁵² When Louis St. Laurent became secretary of state, Pearson was under-secretary. They had the same general

⁵⁰ One area that did not improve was the registry, the system for classifying the records of the department. In 1954, a report was produced by Mary Dench of the Establishments and Operations division to bring greater order to the registry, but it was not acted upon. The registry was not overhauled until the early 1960s. See Hilliker and Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs*, Vol. 2, 181.

⁵¹ Hilliker and Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs* Vol. 2, 85-6.

⁵² Pearson reported that King's approval was needed 'before a telephone extension can be installed'. Quoted in Granatstein, *A Man of Influence*, 186.

aims and conception of Canadian foreign policy and St. Laurent had great confidence in his under-secretary.⁵³ Their consultation was often informal but extensive. In 1948, Pearson moved to the political sphere, and became secretary of state. Pearson was less comfortable as a politician than he had been as a diplomat. In 1949, Heeney observed that Pearson was both tired and nervous and although he was adjusting to a political role, 'he is finding it hard to maintain his normal buoyancy'. One consequence was that Pearson had little time for running the department, which gave Heeney wide berth over general administration.⁵⁴ However, the strains and demands on Pearson as a politician did not make him rely on the under-secretary for policy advice, for several reasons. First, his cohort in the department – Reid, Wrong, Robertson – among many others, seem to have access to him. Second, he was already an expert in the field, certainly more experienced than Heeney. Jack Granatstein has also speculated that Pearson wanted to keep his own council; Heeney was especially appealing as an under-secretary because he did not have a particular vision of Canadian involvement in world affairs.⁵⁵ The extant private correspondence between them does not show Heeney as advisor. Pearson's letters to him contained information about his activities and developments in other countries; there was a gossipy element to them; but he did not ask for guidance.⁵⁶ Much of the correspondence also concerns Heeney's hopes for his next posting: he lobbied hard for the Washington embassy.⁵⁷ The Heeney-Pearson working

⁵³ Hilliker and Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Vol. 2*, 45. Dale C. Thompson, *Louis St. Laurent: Canadian* (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1967), 216.

⁵⁴ ADPH to Robertson, letter, 16 Feb 1949, vol. 1, file 8, Heeney Papers.

⁵⁵ Granatstein, *A Man of Influence*, 241.

⁵⁶ See for example, Pearson to ADPH, 31 Oct. 1951 and 6 Nov. 1951, vol. 1, file 8, Heeney papers.

⁵⁷ Heeney to Pearson, letter, 11 March 1953, vol. 5, Heeney, A.D.P. – Canada - External Affairs 1946-1957, Pearson Papers: MG26 N1, LAC. As Geoffrey Pearson recalled, Heeney's ambition for that coveted spot was well known. *Seize the Day: Lester B. Pearson and Crisis Diplomacy* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), 10. But before he got it, he was sent to Paris to lead the Canadian legation to NATO. Although there were many administrative challenges facing the new international security organization, in which one might expect Heeney to take great interest, he did not seem to enjoy this posting. He continued to lobby for the job in Washington, going so far as to suggest a return to business or law if any other post were offered to him. See: Memo Re my future posting in the Service, 29 April 1953, vol. 1, file 10, Heeney papers.

relationship was therefore characterized by a division of labour and the advisory function was downgraded, a circumstance particular to Heeney's term.⁵⁸

However, it would be misleading to characterize Heeney as only an administrator. He did have strong views about foreign affairs and the work of diplomats. He knew that many members of the department believed that a diplomat's time and energy should concentrate on high diplomacy and questions related to national security and international stability. He disagreed with this view. As he put it, the scope of international relations ranged from 'potatoes to peace'.⁵⁹ In particular, Heeney emphasized the importance of trade as a vital and growing element of Canadian foreign policy as well as a point of intersection between his department and the department of trade and commerce.⁶⁰ Diplomats should therefore be engaged in promoting trade and trade officials should work closely with the department. For instance, he believed that trade and consular work should be part of the same office abroad.⁶¹ It was characteristic of Heeney to appreciate the substantive implications of a more mundane aspect of international relations. There was resistance to his efforts which he believed was rooted in elitist conceptions of what the diplomatic corps was

⁵⁸ The division is reinforced by Heeney's account of a meeting in Paris in 1951 with the heads of the European missions. Pearson met the diplomats in the morning to discuss conditions in the countries to which they were posted. The afternoon session concerned housekeeping matters such as 'personnel, accommodation and allowances, and the hundred and one practical problems of the ambassador's lot'. These concerns weighed heavily with the foreign service officers. To their disappointment, Pearson did not stay for this part of the meeting, leaving Heeney to oversee administrative matters. *Caesar*, 101. Hilliker and Barry also quote Heeney who observed that although he was not 'relieved of the normal function of the under-secretary as the final stage in the channel of advice on all policy questions', Pearson concentrated on policy matters and Heeney's main responsibility was administrative. *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Vol. 2*, 48.

⁵⁹ 'The Conduct of Canadian Diplomacy', Address by Heeney.

⁶⁰ Along the same lines, he established a defence liaison committee so that the work of the DEA and the department of national defence could be better coordinated.

⁶¹ House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs, Minutes, 8 April 1952, 32-3. Consulates around the world began to devote more time to trade and some of these offices were staffed by trade officials. Hilliker and Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Vol. 2*, 56.

all about. Heeney dug in his heels. In his opinion, ‘any ambassador who did not put the advancement of Canada’s commercial interest near the top of his priorities was not fit to head a mission’.⁶² When he was ambassador in Washington, he estimated that 70% of the mission’s time was taken up with economic issues.⁶³

Heeney’s leadership of the department was bolstered by sound judgment and decisive action, particularly in crisis such as the start of the Korean war and American attempts to question Herbert Norman about alleged communist affiliations. Heeney’s response to repeated American allegations of communist tendencies was principled, thorough and reasonable. He did not believe that Norman had violated national security and should not be subjected to the zealotry of the McCarthy hearings. He stated his position unequivocally to the State Department.⁶⁴

Ambassador to Washington and Canadian-American Relations:

Heeney was under-secretary for just over three years. After a brief and unwelcome posting to NATO (then located in Paris), he served two terms in Washington, from 1953 to 1957 and 1959-1962. In between these posting he was chairman of the Canadian Civil Service Commission, a job from which he grudgingly departed when the Diefenbaker government recalled him.⁶⁵ His time in Washington turned him into an expert on Canadian-American relations, with strong views about Canada’s international interests and the manner in which its diplomacy should be conducted. This will be discussed briefly, to show that Heeney was more than an organizational expert.

⁶² Heeney, *Caesar*, 99-100.

⁶³ Letter from Paul Bridle to ADPH, 28 July 1955, vol. 1, file 11, Heeney Papers.

⁶⁴ Hilliker and Barry, *Canada’s Department of External Affairs, Vol. 2*, 65-69; Memo from the USSEA to SSEA re McCarran Committee Charges, 17 Aug. 1951, *DCER Vol. 17, 1951*, 1491-2. Also see Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State 1945-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 415-16.

⁶⁵ 1 Jan 1959, vol. 2, file 27 Memoirs 1959: Chapter 15: diary #1, Heeney papers

Heenev's first posting was challenging and stimulating; the second term was more taxing as relations between the United States and Canada became even more strained, exacerbated by personality clashes between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker and differences in outlook related to the Cold War. In Heenev's attempts to promote greater understanding between policy makers in Washington and Ottawa, he spent much time lobbying his own government. Heenev was particularly alarmed by anti-American rhetoric and policies. He disagreed with the government's concerns about joint air defence and nuclear weapons.⁶⁶ He was horrified at the prospect that the prime minister might disclose the so-called Rostow memo in order to score political points.⁶⁷ Heenev was alarmed when Howard Green, his Minister, dismissed Heenev's warnings that the anti-American slant of Canadian foreign policy was a cause of concern in the State Department. Heenev disparaged the conflation of patriotism and anti-Americanism. Canadian anti-Americanism was based on 'ignorance of U.S. institutions and habits and a lack of appreciation of U.S. problems domestic and international' as well as an unwarranted sense of superiority: 'And in many things we are – without any justification – smug and self satisfied in the conviction that we have managed to combine the best qualities of Britain and America – and maybe France too, whereas the facts are quite other that we exemplify some of the least attractive characteristics of all.'⁶⁸

His forceful objection to anti-American rhetoric and policies revealed his own belief that a close relationship with the US was 'our most precious international asset'.⁶⁹ Heenev also believed that private, informal and candid discussions with his American colleagues were the most effective approach to take. And this approach worked, according to Heenev, because American officials from the president down valued their country's relationship with

⁶⁶ Ambassador in US to SSEA, *DCER Vol. 26, 1959*, #203, 465-6.

⁶⁷ 18 March 1962, vol. 2, file 30, Memoir, 1962, Chapter 15: diary #4, Heenev papers

⁶⁸ 29 March 1959, vol. 2, file 27 Memoirs 1959: Chapter 15: diary #1, Heenev papers.

⁶⁹ Memorandum of Conversation with the Prime Minister in Ottawa, Tuesday, August 30, 1960 and Wednesday, August 31, 1960, vol. 1 file 15, Heenev papers.

Canada and were unfailingly available to meet with their Canadian colleagues.⁷⁰ His understanding of the Cold War affected the importance that he attached to Canadian-American relations. Although a growing constituency in Canada drifted toward a more neutral view of the Cold War in the later 1950s, according to which the Soviet Union was not solely responsible for the conflict, Heeney believed that the Soviet Union was an imperialist power that used subversive means to topple democracies. He explained this to a Montreal audience in 1951, when he was under-secretary:

To all who were neither blind nor unwilling to see, it had become plain before the end of 1947 that, to further their imperialist ends, the Soviet government were determined to block, bully and undermine their former allies and to propagate their communist gospel by any and every means of internal subversion and external pressure.⁷¹

This view did not change and he had no sympathy for the neutralist line favored by Howard Green. He described Green as ‘an innocent abroad ... underneath inclined to a sort of pacific neo-isolationism.’⁷² However, he did not see world affairs exclusively through a Cold War filter and he was troubled by the rigid, ideological, Cold War mentality that prevailed in the US. His characterization of American officialdom as ‘generous, charming and often frightening’ captured his nuanced view of his American counterparts.⁷³ Nor was he reflexively pro-American. He forcefully represented and defended Canadian interests. But his assessment of Canada’s stature in world affairs – it was not a major player⁷⁴ – reinforced his commitment to quiet diplomacy as the most constructive way to address

⁷⁰ A.D.P. Heeney, ‘Washington Under Two Presidents: 1953-1957, 1959-1962’, *International Journal* 22,3 (Summer 1967): 500-511.

⁷¹ ‘Ottawa and the Atlantic Community’, address by Heeney, USSEA, delivered to the Canadian Club of Montreal, 19 March 1951, *Statements and Speeches*, No. 51/11.

⁷² 5 June 1960, vol. 2, file 28, Memoirs 1960, Chapter 15, diary #2, Heeney papers.

⁷³ 29 March 1959, vol. 2, file 27 Memoirs 1959: Chapter 15: diary #1, Heeney papers

⁷⁴ Heeney to Reid, 4 Oct 1960: In this letter, Heeney explained that international circumstances had changed from ‘an earlier and simpler postwar stage’ and this precluded Canada being a major player. vol. 1, file 15, Heeney papers.

problems between the US and Canada. His American colleagues understood and respected the balance that he struck between ‘close collaboration’ and ‘independence of action’.⁷⁵

The Merchant-Heeney report of 1965 reiterated his commitment to quiet diplomacy and congenial Canadian-American relations. The report was commissioned by the Canadian and American governments to examine the causes of disagreement in their relationship. Heeney, then one of Canada’s representative to the International Joint Commission (and chair of the Canadian section), along with Livingston Merchant, former two term US ambassador to Canada, were the principal authors. Their endorsement of quiet diplomacy was labelled a ‘sell-out’ by Canadians and the media who increasingly equated this approach with subservience to the US and complicity in objectionable American foreign policies such as the war in Vietnam.⁷⁶ Heeney was also criticized by his colleagues in the department, many of whom believed that robust representation was called for in dealings with the US.⁷⁷ Heeney was indignant at the reaction: he believed the criticism stemmed from taking one brief passage out of context and confirmed the appeal of anti-Americanism, behaviour which he regarded as childish.⁷⁸ He insisted that if the Canadian aim was to influence American foreign policy, ‘then direct public confrontation is the last and usually the most unpromising

⁷⁵ Biographic material, Arnold Heeney: Ambassador to the United States, POF, Countries (Series 9), Box 113, file: Canada- Security, JFK Trip to Ottawa 5/61 (c), President’s trip to Ottawa, 16-18 May 1961, John F. Kennedy Library. Robertson conveyed the general impressions of American officials that Heeney was particularly well regarded. Telegram for USSEA from Robertson, 29 May 1957. vol. 1, file 11, Heeney Papers. His reputation persisted during his second term.

⁷⁶ Michael Hart, *A Trading Nation: Canadian Trade Policy from Colonialism to Globalization* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 239; Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States 1963-1968* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002). 132

⁷⁷ For example, see the letter from Ross Campbell to ADPH, 21 July 1965, vol. 4, file Canada-US Relations 1965-1968 Merchant-Heeney report, correspondence after publication, Heeney Papers.

⁷⁸ Heeney to Gordon, letter, 2 Sept. 1969. vol. 13, file 6, Heeney Papers.

resort.⁷⁹ The Merchant-Heeney report was his final foray into Canadian foreign relations. He retired early in 1970 and died just before the year's end.

Conclusion:

Heeney's talents for organization and administration were well-known and widely respected. He was called upon to organize everything, including friendly inter-departmental hockey games, bachelor parties (for Malcolm MacDonald) and memorial services. Although he had some definite views about particular issues related to foreign policy and foreign relations, he was not one of the intellectuals in the department of external affairs. But Heeney did not suffer from a sense of inferiority. He understood the value of his organizational talents; so did those who worked with him.⁸⁰ In 1963, he was awarded the Vanier Medal for public service and public administration, a recognition of his impressive contribution to the efficient functioning of government. It is appropriate to think of Heeney not just as an Ottawa Man, but also an Organization Man. However, he did not fit the soulless and drab image associated with men in gray flannel suits.⁸¹ His humour, warmth and decency made him a cherished friend. His appreciation of the importance of process, record-keeping and communication – seemingly mundane matters – were essential to the DEA at a time when the scope of work expanded and the pace quickened. Although he was innovative in the way he restructured the department and he had a long-term influence on its institutional development, he was more of a renovator than an architect. Because he came to

⁷⁹ Speech by ADPH, 'Dealing with Uncle Sam', revised version, 14 Sept. 1965, vol. 4, file Canada-US Relations 1943-1965, Merchant-Heeney Report, background documents, Heeney papers.

⁸⁰ Escott Reid did place Heeney in the category of second rate minds, along with Pearson and Keenleyside. J.L. Granatstein, "Becoming Difficult: Escott Reid's Early Years", in *Escott Reid: Diplomat and Scholar*, eds Greg Donaghy and Stéphane Roussel, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 19.

⁸¹ In Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, the main character Tom Rath describes the impersonal but efficient worker that he sees around him: '...all I could see was a lot of bright young men in gray flannel suits rushing around New York in a frantic parade to nowhere. They seemed to me to be pursuing neither ideals nor happiness – they were pursuing a routine.' (New York: Arbor House, 1955), 272.

the department from outside, he was able to assess the department with a dispassionate eye: it was no coincidence that the department's first substantial re-organization was undertaken by someone who had not been nurtured in the highly personalized system which had developed before the Second World War. Even though Arnold Heene's appointment as under secretary was a departure – the first real administrator – he redefined that position so that his successors would have to be, in some measure, organization men too.⁸²

Francine McKenzie is an associate professor in the department of history at the University of Western Ontario. She is the author of *Redefining the Bonds of Commonwealth 1939-1948: The Politics of Preference* (2002) and co-editor with Margaret MacMillan of *Parties Long Estranged: Canada and Australia in the Twentieth Century* (2003).

⁸² Marcel Cadieux made this point in his reflections on his time as USSEA: 'D'ailleurs ces deux aspects, travail politique et travail administratif sont reliés. Une bonne politique s'élaborera plus normalement dans des cadres administratifs bien au point. Une mauvaise administration peut compromettre le rôle purement politique et spécifique du Ministère.' Cadieux, 'La Tâche de sous-secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires extérieures.' *International Journal* 22, 3 (Summer 1967): 529.