The Dominion-Provincial Relations Commission, also known as the Rowell-Sirois Commission, met from 1937–1940. The Commission was mandated to develop proposals to solve the economic problems of the country, and implicitly to prevent another depression, primarily by looking at constitutional obstacles to economic reform. Its hearings, which received media attention, became the focus for a fierce debate about economics. But while the Commission process and hearings ostensibly aimed at reaching a broad consensus, in practice they acted as exclusionary tools in a hegemonic project.

For historians, analyzing the process through which the Commissioners’ choices were formed presents certain problems. It would be too simple to suggest that the Commissioners had a preconceived notion of their conclusion and proposals, or that they were completely unaware of actively pruning the evidence. Rather, the Commissioners saw themselves as solving a technical problem in a disinterested and decidedly nonideological manner.

This image of the process allowed them to feel justified in favouring groups whose science appeared sound and whose opinions seemed rational, and to promote their own vision while apparently pursuing an open inquiry. When the groups they disregarded were quite rational, or presented scientifically sound proposals, this did not fit the Commissioners’ image of respectable groups who could speak with some authority. Indeed, the Commissioners filtered the evidence for signs of political motivations and only listened respectfully to statements that upheld the principles of their own liberal democratic ideals. Linking ideological motivations to a lack of scientific rigour, they treated some groups with skepticism and others with
respect. Underlying these divisions was a broader debate about democracy itself. The Commission process acted both as a tool for building a liberal “consensus” and a filter for excluding, along ideological and scientific lines, views that did not accord with the result. Science was both an end and a means: it could be used to run the economy efficiently, and, in the Commission process, gave the appearance of building a liberal consensus around ideas of scientific management, justifying the selection of certain kinds of proposals while disregarding others.

The Rowell-Sirois Commission was remarkable for the number of pressure groups — in the words of the Commissioners, “recognized public organizations” — that made presentations. The groups from whom the Commission heard were remarkably varied in both explicit and implicit content. The submissions and hearings transcripts contain dozens of references to several competing economic visions for Canada. In some cases, the ideas outlined by a group clearly aligned with an ideological unity, such as classical liberalism and classical economics. In most cases, however, things were not so clear cut.

**Economic Ideas in the 1930s and the Commissioners’ Background**

There are many characterizations of economic thought in this period, but they generally oversimplify their treatment of the problem of how ideas change in society. Canadian political scientist Neil Bradford, for instance, suggests that there were two groups of economic thinkers: technical and social. Historian Barry Ferguson also proposes a dual stream of liberal thought. While both approaches are useful tools for analyzing the bifurcation of the dominant economic thought in a period of transition, they neglect the presence and influence of other sets of ideas and the groups that held them. Pressure groups and individuals held a remarkable array of opinions, occasionally contradictory, on the best solution to Canada’s economic problems. In order to approach this subject in a way that will make intelligible the vast array of ideas at play in the 1930s, I have summarized existing typologies into a single table that groups ideas into five distinct economic approaches that contended for dominance (see Figure 1).
I have designated these five ideological economic visions as “classical,” “technical,” “social,” “socialist,” and “alternative.” While certain organizations clearly adhered to one subset or another, these five perspectives are not attached to specific or discrete historical groups of intellectuals. Rather, they are outlines of groups of ideas that will help to clarify how the Commission functioned as a focus for debate, and to offer a framework to discuss how the Commissioners made their choices.

While several subideologies might have fit well into the “larger” ideological category of liberalism, important differences pointed to a transition taking place within liberalism on theoretical, political, and social levels. One debate that highlighted these differences extremely well was about the forms, extent, and use of taxation as an economic tool; similarly, the discussion of social welfare brought to the forefront evidence of different opinions about the social purpose of economic policy and government intervention in the economy. All too aware of the diverging views on the economic problems facing the country, the Rowell-Sirois Commissioners felt compelled to cull the evidence presented to them.

The Commissioners were men in whose lifetimes the dominant policy paradigm in the face of economic and social problems had consisted of classical solutions. Their own socioeconomic background and environment included exposure to developing ideas about economic management. Chief Justice Newton Rowell had been a lawyer and prominent Liberal politician at the Ontario and federal levels for several decades. His experience as honorary president of the Canadian Institute for International Affairs, and his connections with university communities in Toronto and British Columbia, had brought him into close contact with social science intellectuals. Joseph Sirois, a lawyer and a Director of the *Banque Provinciale du Canada*, was a member of the *Cercle universitaire de Montréal*. John W. Dafoe, then editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, had been a member of the parliamentary press gallery since 1884. As a journalist and newspaper editor with considerable influence, he was familiar with the widespread unrest and demands for change characterizing the mid- to late 1930s in Canada. He was elected president of the Canadian Political Science Association during
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision (ideology and ideas)</th>
<th>Economic goals</th>
<th>Economic model</th>
<th>Mode of economic regulation</th>
<th>Agent of regulation</th>
<th>Centralization</th>
<th>World view of social problems</th>
<th>Economists</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Ideological model</th>
<th>Ideological aspects</th>
<th>Taxation</th>
<th>Social purposes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>Balanced budget as its own goal, or as a means of stabilization</td>
<td>Laissez-faire equilibrium</td>
<td>Price stabilization, if any</td>
<td>Individual; sometimes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Individualism, scientific</td>
<td>Detached intellectual</td>
<td>Pure theory, disinterested observer, scientific</td>
<td>Classical liberalism, individualism</td>
<td>Corporate autonomy, individual responsibility, self-regulation of markets, market efficiency, competition, equilibrium</td>
<td>Instrument to balance budgets, as an end or to improve stability of the economy, but as little as possible; user-pay</td>
<td>Let the market determine prosperity of deserving poor; charity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Efficiency, economy, equitability of taxation, to some extent wealth distribution</td>
<td>Regulated</td>
<td>Improve demand/purchasing power; contracyclical</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Economic and scientific</td>
<td>Engaged, active intellectual, expertise</td>
<td>Applied theory and applied science, social science</td>
<td>Collective liberalism</td>
<td>Competition, corporate autonomy, individual freedom/scientific administration, regulation, efficiency</td>
<td>Direct tool to stabilize the economy and improve purchasing power, ability to pay</td>
<td>Stabilize the economy to allow maximum prosperity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Equitability of wealth distribution, regulation/limiting of profit</td>
<td>Regulated</td>
<td>Contracyclical</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Moral, economic</td>
<td>Engaged, active intellectual, expertise</td>
<td>Expertise, science</td>
<td>Collective liberalism with collective aims</td>
<td>Scientific administration and regulation of profit and competition</td>
<td>Means to pay for social programs, ability to pay</td>
<td>Improvement of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision (ideology and ideas)</td>
<td>Economic goals</td>
<td>Economic model</td>
<td>Mode of economic regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>Equal distribution of wealth, elimination of severe limitation of profit</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>Conservative planning</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Scientific, structuralist moral</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Socialism, Marxism</td>
<td>Anti-profit, anti-competition, socialism, control &quot;from below&quot;</td>
<td>Means to pay for social programs, distribution of wealth</td>
<td>Improvement of life</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>Conformity with ordained economic laws</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Laissez-faire</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Moral, religious, divine economic laws</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>No usury, etc.</td>
<td>Natural or divine equilibrium</td>
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the last leg of the Commission’s hearings. Robert Alexander Mackay and Henry Forbes Angus were both university professors, Mackay of government and political science at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Angus of economics and political science at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Given their ages and backgrounds, the Commissioners were likely to have taken the classical perspective as common sense and simultaneously to have been interested in finding new, mostly technical, solutions.

Common Sense and the Process of Hegemony in the Commission In considering how these ideas might affect the outcome of a process such as the Commission, Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is instructive. Autonomous ideas, as part of relatively cohesive sets of ideas or ideologies, enable historical actors to justify their actions. In turn, the ideas that make up an ideology exist in relations that are historically established and recognized as part of a philosophically coherent whole. They are part of the political landscape. According to Gramsci, they form a “common sense.” This concept can help explain the continued presence of ideas such as laissez-faire-style government policy or “deserving poor,” as well as the commonality of certain ideas to different groups.

More precisely, in Gramsci’s understanding of cultural development, the build-up over time of accepted and often dominant practices provides a backdrop of ideas, politics, and relations between people that must be considered, consciously or unconsciously, in any strategy to make fundamental changes in that culture. It means that ideas probably have a better chance of succeeding if they have elements in common with the current culture. Finally, it suggests that increasingly influential ideas are likely in any case to contain those commonalities by virtue of having arisen from the preexisting conditions of the culture. In the case of the Commission, ideas with a foothold in the dominant approaches of past decades were relatively more important than completely new or foreign ideas. “Common sense” was solidifying around ideas of scientific management and expertise.

Gramsci further suggests that “agents of ideological formation … are intellectuals aligned with either the historic bloc most clearly dominating
the state, or with emerging groups and ideas.”

According to Gramsci, emergent ideas can become dominant only in a historic moment of such successful grouping. However, to achieve this dominance “requires extensive work of political organization — an essential part of any hegemonic strategy.” Because this is a process that is shaped by contingencies of the moment, there is no predicting the outcome of events. The Rowell-Sirois Commissioners can be analyzed as part of such a historic bloc. They had an image of their own activity as a scientific project, which in turn justified their favouring groups whose science appeared sound and whose opinions seemed rational. Their way of identifying allies and forming alliances was to respond to the testimony of pressure groups in a variety of ways. When the groups were self-styled economists whose credentials the Commissioners evidently found lacking, they were particularly likely to receive disrespectful and dismissive treatment.

Standing uneasily beside their privileging of science, the Commissioners had political motives: fighting socialism. The Commissioners could also look to science to provide a method for filtering out the evidence of groups with apparent or suspected political or ideological motivations. From the Commissioners’ perspective, decisionmaking that was political (in the sense of either ideologically directed or patronage based) was the opposite of scientific management and therefore led to inefficiency. At all costs, political distortion or manipulation of scientific management had to be avoided. Therefore, an important aspect of the selection process was to expose and confront the ideological assumptions of certain groups. Only if a pressure group seemed to be motivated by the wrong politics was it suspect, as was its science.
The Role of Pressure Groups and Intellectuals  The Commission convened in August 1937, held eight months of hearings, received 427 submissions, and reported two years and eight months after the order in council was signed. It employed 26 economic experts, nine constitutional and legal experts, and produced a total of 28 expert studies, listed by author at the end of the first volume of the *Report*. The Commission heard from “recognized public organizations” and governments, only “reserving the right” to hear from specific and invited individuals. Most of these individuals, or those actually listed, were economists. The expert staff employed by the Commission to pursue specific topics of enquiry underlined the technical bent of the Commission overall. For instance, it was uniformly agreed by these experts that the problem was to fix the economy, not to alleviate suffering.

The involvement of experts in the Commission, including figures such as Queen’s University economist and later Deputy Finance Minister W.A. Mackintosh, and Queen’s University political scientist J.A. Corry, was significant for what it showed about the Commission’s predisposition towards both certain ideas and the involvement of experts in general; the involvement of the pressure groups was also an essential part of the process. The Commission was a central site for the debate about the economic future of the nation. This debate centred on solving a recognized, but not objectively new, problem: the prevailing social order, with its regional inequities and widespread unemployment problems, was not working for a large portion of Canadian society. To solve this problem, the Commission allowed for the participation of many different voices and not only those of academics. In fact, the Commission placed explicit importance on the involvement of pressure groups when it rendered a “ruling” against hearing from anyone but “formally organized associations.” The Commissioners’ interest in pressure groups was connected to their recognition of formally organized groups as more democratic and representative. But the rising importance of pressure groups and experts coincided with, and was connected to, a commensurate increase in public reliance on expert science to explain and solve problems.
The Commission Proceedings: Selecting for Science  This opposition of politics to efficiency fit well with the views of many, if not most, of the pressure groups that presented to the Commission. As such, it can be seen as an element of “common sense.” The Commissioners’ concerns about political motivations, expressed through the Commission process, worked to reinforce the acceptability of the Commission’s results. At times, this took the form of an assault on the science used to back up a group’s demands, or an interrogation of a group’s ideological position. In order to both maintain their nonpolitical standards and to keep working towards a consensus, the Commissioners also used the yardsticks of scientific and professional respectability to exclude groups with alternative perspectives not easily adapted to the forming consensus. Often, this meant that the Commissioners did not listen to groups who, in fact, held opinions quite similar to the opinions of the Commissioners’ favourites. This shows that, for the Commissioners, exposing political or otherwise biased motivations of groups that did not share their own political values was ultimately even more important than identifying common elements upon which to base their recommendations. The layers of the evidence filter used to limit and control access to this debate strained out ideological motivation first, and substance second. These underlying elements of common sense come through clearly in the transcripts of hearings and submissions to the Commission.

Because the Commission was conceived as a scientific process, groups who both considered themselves as economic experts and whose ideology, in the view of the commissioners, needed exposing became the focus of negative attention to expose their science as flawed. The Single Tax Association was one such group. Its brief claimed that taxation “wherein it ha[d] departed from the collection of the economic rent” was “not observing the laws of economic science. Our fiscal troubles cannot be cured until we do this.” For the single taxers, customs duties interfered with the natural abilities of Canadian producers, but in the final analysis, only taxes on land revenue were “just and equitable.” This claim was backed up by quotations from 15 individuals whom the association considered to be economists, including Adam Smith, Theodore Roosevelt, and Henry George.
classical basis of the association’s brief and the group’s belief in tax fairness were principles shared by many other groups appearing before the Commission, but these characteristics were not enough to get the group a respectful hearing on the merits of its argument. During the Single Tax Association’s presentation in Ottawa in January 1938, Commissioner H.F. Angus, himself an economist as we have seen, tackled what he perceived as an unscientific assumption about wholesalers’ profits:

Commissioner Angus: It may be very frightful that the wholesaler should get this profit and the consumer should not —

Mr. Bagwell: I am not suggesting that it is frightful.

Commissioner Angus: …But does it not to an equal extent increase the volume of such goods, which the wholesaler in his capacity as consumer is able to buy? If he has made this extra profit he can spend it on consumption goods.29

The single taxer G.B. Bagwell questioned the notion that this profit would have exactly the same effect on purchasing power as if it were divided among consumers. In the end, unable to convince Angus, he simply stated that the result was a “shifting of the burden from one class to another,” onto those least able to bear it. Angus saw this contention as proof of both bad science and ideological motivation. Apparently satisfied that they had ascertained a political motivation behind the Single Tax Association’s scientific argument, the Commissioners soon rushed Bagwell through the remainder of his presentation.30

The Sound Money Economic Association, based in Winnipeg, was another group whose science was in for severe testing. Interested in basing an economic system on an interpretation of the Bible that placed “man the consumer” at the centre of the system, the association called for the Commission to “make man the consumer in our own likeness.” For them, “consumption [was] the driving force of the economic system, not money.” The Association laid claim to the territory of economics. Citing Apostle Paul as a “great economist,” they grouped others as “would be economists” who would “state that money flows from the point of a fountain pen.”
While the tendency today may be to see this group as peculiar, its focus was nonetheless economic and its ideas concerned the acknowledged problem of allocation of resources. The Commissioners certainly seemed to find them peculiar; like the single taxers, the Sound Money Economic Association found itself rushed through its presentation, not even deemed worthy of serious questioning.  

The League for Economic Democracy also saw its claims to economic expertise meet unsympathetic ears. Its members harboured the largely shared conviction that the crux of the problems facing Canada was economic. But their science was destined for a failing grade from the Commissioners, and unorthodox elements were used to dismiss ideas the Commissioners had welcomed in other contexts. The League for Economic Democracy’s brief asserted that to merely shift tax powers would not solve the “economic problem of a nation,” nor would social welfare measures such as relief and unemployment insurance solve “economic sickness.” The problem for them was that private corporations printed all the currency. If this practice were nationalized, full employment could be realized. The “Hallatt Plan,” as set out in the brief and during the hearings, suggested that the Dominion government should have the sole authority to create and issue money. The effect would be to subject provincial and municipal economies to federal jurisdiction. In effect, the Hallatt Plan advocated a calculation of the total cost of national production, and the creation of just enough money to pay for it.  

The League was setting forth an economic plan that required a finite system under which economic growth was a feature of population growth and nothing more. But the group’s statement that national income could be “maintained[1] at any desired level, preventing the wide fluctuations in the national income which make the debts incurred in times of inflation unpayable in times of deflation,” appeared to be based on two different definitions of national income: the amount of money exchanged for goods in the country, on one hand, and the amount of money taken in by governments, on the other. Angus, the economist, was also concerned about the group’s apparent disregard for the connection between demand and inflation; its assumption appeared to be that inflation would be possible only if more money were issued.
The clash of ideas became clearer as Hallatt went on to elaborate his opinion that his ideas were based on the only economic principles upon which democracy could stand. He called for a compromise between socialism, which for him meant common ownership of absolutely everything, and “extreme individualism.”36 Both Hallatt’s attraction to interest-free money and his allergy to socialism can be explained by the fact that he was himself a manufacturer. For him, controlling the amount of printed money was an alternative to the socialistic attempt to control credit he saw unfolding in the United States.37 But while the Commissioners doubtless shared this suspicion of socialism, they were looking for an alternative that would be practical in a capitalist economy. Since Hallatt’s plan did not account for growth, it could not be put into practice. The League for Economic Democracy may have been worthy of questioning, but it was not likely a very pleasant experience.

What stands out in the case of these three groups is that they shared with the Commissioners a general classical approach to economics, which they combined with aspects of the social perspective in their goals of improving Canadian quality of life. The Single Tax Association’s concern about poverty, the Sound Money Economic Association’s humanism, and the League for Economic Democracy’s hope for full employment all demonstrated how general the idea was that economics could solve the nation’s problems. And while their classical common sense was shared by the Commissioners, their ideas for achieving their social goals were not, in the end, the solutions the Commissioners sought. Further, because they claimed to be economic experts, the Commissioners were compelled to examine their science. And the science of all three groups would have appeared questionable to the economists who formed part of the Commission or its staff.

The Economic Reform Association was also the subject of close scrutiny, but because it was probably the most purely Keynesian group to appear before the Commission, and its ideas were therefore the kind of new solution to which the Commissioners were already drawn, its ideas held up much better under pressure. The group made its position clear at the outset of its brief: “it is our belief that these problems — social and political in their manifestations — are in reality largely economic in their origin; and, certainly that they have attained their present magnitude principally because of the partial
breakdown of the economic machine. Our approach to these problems is, therefore, primarily by way of economic mechanics.”38 The group also asserted that the federal government should address deflation if efforts by the central bank failed, by expanding the money supply in order to fund public works. Relief should not simply be a way to counter unrest, but should be “a deliberate financial device for stimulating the demand for goods and services.”39

The Economic Reform Association also exhibited a humility regarding its own level of expertise and an openness to debate: “this association has always taken the stand that some things are matters for technical experts, and others, for public direction, and all we attempt to do is suggest the form which public direction should take.” Upon presenting its brief in Toronto, the group received a cordial hearing, respectful questioning, and an ebullient thank you from Sirois, as acting Chairman: “Will you allow me to say, sir, it is an interesting brief, very fairly and very cleverly presented and defended.”40

To be sure, not all groups whose common sense was similar to that of the Commissioners were treated this way. The Catholic Minority of Manitoba (CMM), whose concern was education at the provincial level, recommended using the tax system to increase Catholic school funding in Alberta. During its presentation, Commissioner Newton Rowell asserted that the group’s concern was not within the scope of the Commission. The group was not seriously questioned, but its claim to be representative was demolished by Commissioner Louis St. Laurent, then a lawyer for the Commission. He insisted that the brief did not appear to reflect the views of all the members of their parishes.41 While there seems to be some basis for the Commissioners’ claim that education at the provincial level had no relation to the Commission’s task, recommendations of a similarly indirect nature had been made by other groups, with some effort made to link such demands with the Commission’s terms of reference.42 It is worth noting that both St. Laurent and Joseph Sirois were Catholic. Joseph Sirois and the CMM presenters had a tense discussion about their implication that the Commissioners were not objective.43 Therefore it seems clear that the CMM was disregarded because of its failure to make a claim to be representative, and its lack of expert status. In short, it failed the test of democracy and not science — but the Commissioners’ own actions here were not entirely objective.
The Commission Proceedings: Politics vs. Good Management  The 1937 political landscape was such that for many groups appearing before the Commission, as well as for the Commissioners themselves, the ideas of political motivations, including politically motivated patronage, and good management were diametrically opposed. Several key examples illustrate this process in action. Social workers were an example of a group with a social viewpoint, who shared a concern for scientific management. As Joy Maines of the Canadian Association of Social Workers related:

I think that the view in their minds of those in political power, shall I say, have been, as I said earlier, to keep costs at as low a level as possible, and they have been inclined to think perhaps that social workers are too charitable, shall we say, and that costs will go up if they are put into the administrative posts. Unemployment relief, involving large expenditures, became big business overnight, and there being a large number of people unemployed who needed jobs, there seemed to be the places where they might be put, and there was no standard set up of the requirements for the carrying out of such work.

Maines had seen the effects of patronage on the maintenance of standards in the arena of relief. In asserting a need for standards of good administration, she also displayed the opinion that business-like management is efficient.

The Canadian Welfare Council insisted on an absence of political manipulation for the implementation of any future unemployment insurance scheme. Charlotte Whitton, presenting to the Commission in Ottawa in May 1938, explained how a regulatory agency could help decide which workers would be eligible for the program, asserting that a principle of actuarial soundness could be applied and that proof would need to be submitted to the effect that a particular industry should or should not be included. McKay asked “Do you mean proof that would convince the Social Security Board or proof that would convince the politician?” Whitton replied:

Well, I think it would depend on the proximity of an election to the time in which the proof was admitted. But I think there is a middle course, with your social security board or your social insurance board making strong recom-
mendation direct to Parliament through the Minister….You would have two things: You would have the actual financial situation of the country and you would have public opinion. And I think it would substitute an actuarially sound basis for what was otherwise horse-trading.46

If, on one hand, the self-interest of party politicians was one source of trouble for good economic management, another was the effect of the popular will. We have already seen that the Commissioners accepted testimony only from formally organized groups, implicitly rejecting individual opinions. The Commissioners heard receptively from groups who held that the susceptibility of regulatory agencies to public opinion was another way in which politics could interfere with good management. In this perspective, politics was synonymous with the threat posed to moral agencies by broad-franchise democracy. At the Commission’s second public sitting in Ottawa, The United Church recommended that “in the larger centres there should be a relief commission, a number of whom would be citizen representatives and not dependent upon the vote of the relief recipients.” Commissioner R. A. MacKay asked “You would think there would be no idea of voting political favours?” The church’s representative, Reverend Mr. Mutchmor, replied “I know the citizen members are in for two or three years and then they are not, but we have to face this problem. It is a problem of human nature which is the same no matter what you recommend.”47 A few minutes later St. Laurent addressed the topic again:

Q. On page 2 [of your brief] there is a general statement made that the group believes in the democratic form of government is [sic] the most desirable form of government for the Canadian people. Is not the suggestion with respect to relief administration and other social problems, that it may be necessary to eliminate the operation of the elected representative, rather a reflection upon the recommendation concerning the democratic form of government?

A. Mr. Chairman, in the old Greek city, each citizen had a place of responsibility. He took it gladly. I think that is the very essence of democracy. When citizens, as citizens, without going through the routine of an election, offer themselves for voluntary service, it is a major contribution.48
The United Church held views about the duties of citizens in a democracy, which led them to apparently contradictory conclusions: that human nature had to be overcome, and that regulatory agencies could do so scientifically while still upholding democracy.

Municipal officials and politicians saw a need for a cushion from political influence by the unruly masses, as this comment by a representative of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities makes clear:

We have had certain experiences in Montreal, and there have been complaints within a short time after their installation that they were inefficient. There has been an agitation to remove the relief administration each time there has been one, and it has started in the same corner of the council room shortly after a new group has got into office… we changed the relief commission eleven months ago and the new commission was attacked from the same sources shortly after it took office. So long as pressure exists to put cases on relief which are not entitled to go on relief, the administration will be condemned.49

The consensus was forming around a common sense idea about management at the exclusion of local and patronage politics. What the comments from the municipalities and the United Church show is that these differences in outlook among the participating groups and the Commissioners also amounted to a debate about the nature of democracy, to oppose patronage and popular politics to experts, an informed electorate, and scientifically administered regulation.

The Commission Proceedings: Defending Liberal Democracy Considering the extent of unrest in the 1930s by, in particular, unemployed organizations, it is probably not surprising that a mistrust of democracy as it had been implemented, to date, was not restricted to groups with a classical outlook. But socialist or socialist-influenced groups, while not explicitly opposed to efficiency, did not share the general appreciation for it, nor the allergy to political influence. The League for Social Reconstruction, in fact, anticipated Commission resistance to its call for economic regulation in order to limit such negative social effects as unemployment. However, what they perhaps did not appreciate was the line being drawn by many, the Commissioners included, between representative democracy and influence by the
masses. The resulting communications misfire is evident in the following exchange during the League’s presentation:

Mr. Marsh: If there is no control at all of economic instability, the social consequences are too grave, and no State in this modern world can be a laissez faire state any longer. Unemployment, drought, crop prices — these are three examples which prove that.

The Chairman: Which prove what?

Mr. Marsh: Which prove that it is impossible not to have any control at all. It is impossible for the Dominion government to stand aside and to say that economic control is not a part of the government’s power or a part of government functions.

The Chairman: You mean in those three fields, all matters of public concern, the Dominion has found it necessary to intervene. Is that your point?50

Its other submissions show that the League was actually asking for more political influence — in the form of participation in decisionmaking by “consumer, farmer or labour representation” — while the Commissioners heard the League as saying the state ought to merely continue to apply its influence more directly and in more arenas. Interestingly, the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association also sought more democratic decisionmaking; it hoped that tax levels would be set in future by parliament and not by Cabinet meetings.51 Interestingly, so was the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association; it hoped that tax levels would be set in future by parliament and not by Cabinet meetings. One surmises that the Association’s desire was for greater access to taxation discussions by opposition party members of parliament.52
the bad times hit.\textsuperscript{53} The Canadian Bankers’ Association complained that taxes were often increased with no reason and no warning.\textsuperscript{54} The Canadian Manufacturers’ Association and the Canadian Electrical Association made similar statements, and the Commissioners appeared to share their opinion that government tax behaviour had been at times unplanned and unreasonable.\textsuperscript{55} But other groups found their criticisms challenged by the Commissioners. The League for Social Reconstruction, in particular, was the focus of negative attention by one of the Commission’s lawyers:

Mr. Stewart: On page 17 you make this statement: “The dominion is well along the road that leads to industrial feudalism, to class conflicts and to undemocratic social standards.” I want to put this question to you, Mr. Scott: Do you think that there was ever a time in Canadian history when labour was freer and more powerful and more capable of looking after its own interests than it is to-day [sic]?

Scott responded that changes for the working class had generally been for the worse, which had necessitated government intercession. An exchange followed in which Scott and Stewart argued about the relative strength of position of the worker. After a minute or two, Stewart asked “Perhaps you will answer my question now. In your opinion, was there ever a time when labour was freer and more powerful and more capable of looking after itself than it is to-day [sic] in Canada?” Scott continued to explain his position that the modern city and industrialization had weakened the worker in relation to his employer. The implication here was that the League for Social Reconstruction sought a model of democracy that gave more voice to workers. Mr Stewart’s last word on the issue was “That is as far you go in answering my question.”\textsuperscript{56} A further exchange a few minutes later illustrates how the League for Social Reconstruction’s view of government inaction clashed with the views of the Commissioners:

Mr. Stewart: Turning to page 22, I find this statement: ‘The federal government has been altogether too willing in the past to shirk its responsibilities of leadership and to refrain from making use even of the powers which it undoubtedly possesses. The slightest hint of provincial objection has often been enough to prevent any action at all.’ Will you give some specific instances of that?
Scott responded by outlining how unemployment insurance, despite being a principle of the Liberal Party since 1919, had nevertheless not been the subject of an attempt to implement it, and therefore it had taken until 1937 to discover its unconstitutionality. Scott pointed out that the constitutionality of the program had in fact “always been [in] some doubt.” Thereupon Stewart asserted:

I would take it, Mr. Scott, that those two sentences to which I have referred are a serious indictment of the federal government of Canada, of shirking responsibility, and I should think you would have more than one specific clear-cut instance of it before making that statement. Have you any such clear-cut cases which you could cite?

Scott replied that the League believed that various levels of government should have acted sooner in “the whole field of social legislation.” Stewart, continuing his questioning, shifted focus to tackle the League’s science.

Thus, for the Commissioners, democracy meant liberal democracy, the current model, as opposed to a model more closely aligned with social or socialist approaches, and they felt compelled to defend it. They believed that this kind of democracy worked, not just for elite sectors of society, but for the marginalized as well. This is evident in the exchanges they had with, in particular, groups representing women or whose membership was predominantly women. Despite the fact that many of the women’s groups’ arguments fell, in the Commissioners’ view, outside the scope of their study, they felt compelled to defend democracy’s ability to deal with grievances given a chance. However, in the manner in which they spoke to or treated women presenters, including women participating in the presentations of non-women’s groups, the Commissioners unwittingly exposed some of the failings of liberal democracy. Although liberalism claimed to hold a “commitment to transcend prejudices, among them (supposedly) presuppositions about the lot of women in life,” the liberal theme of representative government supported by an informed electorate contended with the claims of women in the Commission’s proceedings. Further, the Commissioners exhibited behaviour towards women that contradicted the underlying assumption of equal treatment.
When the *Ligue des Droits de la Femme* and the *Alliance Canadienne pour le vote des femmes du Québec* presented, the Commissioners refrained from cutting them off as they had done with other groups whose presentations were thought to be “outside the scope.”\(^{59}\) St. Laurent questioned both groups, engaging them in a discussion that seemed designed to show the positive advances for women of the past few months and years, such as a fair wage board order for equal wages and recent decisions to require the pasteurization of milk.\(^{60}\) He was eager to assert that conditions for women had, in fact, improved, while emphasizing that, given time, democracy would provide the gains the groups sought.\(^{61}\) The Alliance may have found his attitude a bit naive:

**Q.** You will probably agree that when the majority of the women in the province of Quebec, believe they should have a vote, they will ask for it and probably get it?

**A.** We have had agitation and made request after request. I do not know what happened to these requests, but they were probably thrown into the wastebasket. …I think that saying women do not want a vote is not a very good reason. They do want a vote.

... 

**Q.** You seem to be in a fair way of getting a very substantial number of the women of Quebec interested in the question?...Do you not really believe when there is a majority of the women of Quebec want the vote [sic] that they will get it?

**A.** Well, no campaign was ever drafted to take away the vote from the men for the reason they did not care to vote.\(^{62}\)

While the Commissioners did not dismiss these groups, they listened to them with the purpose of convincing them of the value of the status quo to achieve their goals. The women’s voices were important but, as with the workers, not important enough to centralize in the practise of democracy. Individual women presenters were subject to the same estimation of expertise as men, but because they were women the estimation was tinted with discrimination. Jessie M. Norris of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF) experienced this judgement first hand. In order to get Sirois to listen
to her, she had to assert herself in a way her copresenter did not, first by a tentative “May I speak, sir?” and eventually by jumping right in. She was then interrupted, and had to demand of Sirois “May I finish my statement?” On the other hand, Charlotte Whitton of the Canadian Welfare Council was treated with the utmost respect; because she had already attained the status of expert, the Commissioners did not tend to disregard her in the same way as they did Norris, despite Whitton’s commitment to classical approaches. However, even the exchange with Whitton was tinged with sexism; upon completion of her presentation, Sirois stated “I do not know many people who could have made a presentation such as the one which we have heard this afternoon. You have put into it, not only your heart, but your brain. I congratulate you and sincerely thank you for your presentation.” The statement shows the immense respect Sirois held for Whitton, but certainly no male presenter would have been congratulated for putting his heart and brain into the discussion. Other women’s and women-dominated groups were simply not taken seriously enough for extensive consideration. The Commissioners seemed unsure of how to relate to the Housewives’ Association of Canada; they did not question them, but thanked them for their presentation by pointing out that, because all of the Commissioners were also consumers, they would read the brief carefully.

So the democracy the Commissioners defended was liberal democracy. And, for them, part of liberal democracy was an absence of extreme ideas such as socialism. Socialism was, in their view, a direct threat to democracy. Groups whose ideas seemed clearly based on these extreme ideas — that is, communism and socialism as well as corporatism — were reserved either the most dismissive or the most challenging treatment. The Communist Party of Canada (CPC) experienced one of the longest examinations of any group appearing during the hearings. The first barrage of questions aimed to expose the CPC’s antibusiness bias by questioning in great detail the source of the figures they used in calculating national income. Stewart exhibited a suspicion of the CPC’s numbers that was absent from questioning of groups such as, for instance, the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association: “Well, I would suggest, Mr. Buck, that the Commission is entitled to know the basis on which you work those figures out. Is it not
true that this analysis [of the national income] you make on page 16 is fundamental to the whole case [for redistribution] you have presented?" 

While it was entirely reasonable in the context of the Commission for Stewart to ask this question, the remarkable fact is that no such reasonable questioning of the basis of numbers used in a brief or presentation was undertaken for other groups making similar extrapolations, even at their own admission. For instance, the analysis presented by the Citizens’ Research Institute of Canada, extrapolated from sets of numbers derived from government statistics, held an underlying assumption that the purpose of government economic planning should be to balance budgets. Similarly, a Canadian Manufacturers’ Association statement, made by H.W. MacDonnell, about the negative social effects of relief on morale and self-sufficiency was, at best, half-heartedly questioned.

In contrast, the questioning of the CPC’s facts aimed to discredit its case for redistribution by exposing the ideological assumptions underlying its claims; assumptions the Commissioners expected to reflect an attack to democracy. Their interrogation included apparent attempts to educate Buck on what actually was included in the Dominion Bureau of Statistics national income estimates. Stewart, on behalf of the Commission, was trying to make a case that the CPC’s failure to account for certain aspects of the estimate had resulted in exaggerating the portion of the national income accruing to “the capitalist.” Seeing which way the wind was blowing, Buck interjected: “In excluding those figures, we do not do so with the idea of strengthening our argument; we do so with the idea that it is extraneous a matter [sic] and would only confuse the issue.” A few minutes later the gloves were off: “My suggestion for the moment is that the $125.00 [annual wage estimate for domestic servants] was a guess, Mr. Buck, and I put it to you that it was a guess?” Buck differentiated between a guess and an estimate, and called for the publication of exact public figures to eliminate future need to estimate and extrapolate from incomplete figures. Later still, Stewart appeared to be trying to get Buck to come clean by threatening him with exposure of his supposed inaccuracies: “Well, I would like to get the process by which you arrive at those figures? You understand that the Commission has economists and experts working on these figures and we
would like to be able to check them?” And finally: “Mr. Buck, is your purpose in making that suggestion [of taxing stock market gains] any more than the destruction of accumulated capital?” Here, Angus took over the questioning briefly and made further attempts to expose Buck’s ideological motives.

Stewart’s next few questions aimed at exposing what he saw as flaws in the CPC’s position on fair taxation: “Now, I want to suggest to you that having regard to the exemptions you provide in your proposed income tax... Your suggestion is that a fair share means that a relatively very small number of people would be paying anything at all?” Mr. Buck agreed. “The others would be paying nothing?” Buck again agreed. “Do you think that the language you have used ‘pay his fair share’ [sic] fairly designates such a situation?” The exchange continued with Stewart asking whether Buck felt it would be a healthy society in which 80 to 90 percent of people paid no tax, and Buck asserting that Stewart was misrepresenting the brief.

After questioning Buck’s assumptions regarding taxation, Stewart finished by ascertaining the CPC’s affiliation to the Communist International, and the Party’s aim to “conduct a revolution to overthrow the bourgeois and create an international Soviet government.” Buck stated in response “I am waging the conflict right here this afternoon against the bourgeois.” Buck went on to explain how, in the past, revolutions had led to the democratic rights enjoyed in modern capitalist societies, and that communists in general preferred peaceful means if possible to achieve their goals. Commissioner J.W. Dafoe pointed out that a future majority might wish to reverse the overthrow of capitalism; Buck expressed skepticism about that possibility. Dafoe ended the questioning of Buck with a statement:

All right, that is what I wanted to get at. And I just want to observe that while the interim policy is underway it would be very necessary to have a large, fat, industrial capitalist class to make the thing operate.

Mr. Buck: Well, we have a fairly, not a very large one, but a pretty fat and substantial one already.

Calling, as they were, for a fundamental redistribution of wealth, the CPC probably did not expect to be welcomed with open arms. However, the
exchange is remarkable for its exposition of the political motives of the Commissioners. Not only did the Commissioners apparently hope to expose faulty logic and assumptions on behalf of a group they considered ideologically motivated, they also hoped to expose the threat to democracy that they believed the group posed. There was evidence of the Commissioners having prepared beforehand for the second day of the session, including a remarkable familiarity on Stewart’s part with certain details of the national income estimates, and his consultation during questioning with a Mr. Smith on the exact numbers from the 1931 census. The examples of the CPC and, above, the League for Social Reconstruction, show that the Commissioners were at least in part concerned to protect the basics of the economic system, and that for them such protection meant a corollary protection of the kind of democracy already practised in Canada.

The Commissioners also combatted socialist ideas by taking other opportunities to debunk ideas about profiteering by big business. They spent some time on this theme in their questioning of the assumptions of the Alberta CCF Clubs and the League for Social Reconstruction. They also took such opportunities during the presentations of business associations. The presentation of the Dominion Mortgage and Investments Association offers one such example:

The Chairman: I have an impression, Mr. Leonard, that the feeling entertained out there by a great many people as to the possible earnings or profits of the mortgage companies is quite different from that presented in this brief, I think you will agree with that.

Mr. Leonard: I think that is so, Mr. Chief Justice.

Mr. Leonard: I think there has probably been a lack of putting forward the case, such as has been presented here. I think that is quite true.

Commissioner Dafoe: Then there is the almost universal belief that the man who holds the bond is someone who can well afford to take, what they call,
his licking. This impression is universal and deep rooted, that it involves no hardship on the other end, that this man can well afford it.

... 

The Chairman: Mr. Leonard, would this be a correct statement? Taking into consideration the situation of the past seven years, is there a single mortgage company which has made any money in western Canada in the past 25 years?85

By doing their bit to debunk what they saw as myths about unreasonable profits, using science and arguments, the Commissioners could hope to help undermine the arguments of those holding more radical political ideas about the economy and democracy.

The Commission Report  The Report of the Commission was a synthesis of technical ideas framed in ways that appealed to classical common sense. In its first volume, the Report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations set out particular conclusions about the causes and effects of the Depression in Canada.86 The third volume contained statistical documentation. In the presentation of their recommendations in the second volume, the Commissioners catered to the expectations of the hundreds of pressure groups from which they had heard.

The Commission’s recommendations in the area of public finance, in particular, were framed to persuade any advocates of maintaining the current economic arrangements and approach to the economy of the folly of such an approach. The section was framed to assert the need for centralization, and to persuade business of the need for income tax in order to balance taxation inequities. Two options were presented. Plan I was a technical solution to the economic and social problems under consideration. Plan II was the continuation of the status quo, with perhaps a few adjustments to provincial subsidies. A technical perspective shaped the presentation of the arguments, but the content itself responded to the desires of the more classically oriented sections of society.

Plan I for public finance portrayed the problem as one of chaos versus order. The economy had developed in an unplanned and uncontrolled fashion, which had resulted in an illogical relationship between the economy and the powers of each province and the federal government. Further, the
haphazard development of the economy had resulted in an unhealthy reliance on cost-based taxes. Therefore the Commission, quoting its terms of reference, recommended a “fiscal plan which, in its opinion, ‘will best effect a balanced relationship between the financial powers and the obligations and functions of each governing body, and conduce to a more efficient, independent and economical discharge of governmental responsibilities in Canada.’”

By emphasizing the need for efficiency, the Commissioners could hope for broad support.

The transferrals of tax powers that the Commission proposed were supported by technical arguments that also addressed the more classical concerns of business about the tendency of taxation to interfere with profit. For instance, according to the Report, income tax was an indispensable policy tool because corporation taxes had ballooned into a chaotic and complicated mess rife with inequity, and only central control could provide any hope of permanently fixing the problem. Similarly, inheritance taxes were so complex as to call for central regulation. The final paragraph of the section was devoted to outlining the dangers of double taxation created and perpetuated by Plan II.

In contrast, Plan II, which suggested maintaining the status quo with the addition of some provincial subsidies, would produce “unfair” and “intolerable pressure on taxpayers in some provinces.” It would not “pass the tests of equity in taxation and efficiency in government which Plan I has been designed to meet.” While some provinces might benefit from Plan II in the short term, Plan I was “designed” to stimulate the national income, simplify taxation, centralize debt management, and set out “average Canadian standards of education and welfare.” Plan II could not hope to meet those standards. Adding provincial subsidies without a commensurate plan for managing the economy would mean only higher taxes and lower national income: “palliatives of this sort, however attractive superficially, are damaging and dangerous.”

The recommendations also addressed the concerns of those with a social vision for Canada’s future, both by mentioning social welfare standards in the Public Finance section and by addressing the area of social services as a whole. The approach taken in the field of social services was a synthesis of
technical and social ideas framed as classical common sense. Relief was the area of social policy with the “most serious abuses and inefficiencies;” therefore the federal government should take over responsibility for “unemployed employables” — a technical solution to a social problem.95 But by suggesting that the “incapable” unemployed should be a local responsibility, while the “capable” who merely lacked opportunity should be federal, the Commission took into consideration the still-prevailing classical common sense left from decades of morally driven, private and individual approaches to relief and welfare services.96 Meanwhile, the overall solution provided was technical: sections concerning unemployment referred to the status quo as “chaos;”97 traditional methods were no longer working in the modern context.98 Therefore, suggested the Commission, unemployment needed to be managed as a policy issue: “monetary and exchange, national taxation and deficit financing, trade and tariff.”99

The Report reflected a consensus formed of technical ideas, expressed in a way to further spread that consensus through couching of its recommenda-
dations both in common sense terms appealing to classical approaches, and in terms of meeting the expectations of those hoping for technical and social solutions. Those groups with socialist or alternative outlooks were excluded on scientific and political bases. The Report, like the Commission proceedings, used science as a means in itself to achieve a scientific solution to the economic problems the Commission was mandated to solve.

**Conclusion** Linking ideological motivations to a lack of scientific rigour, evincing with a strong antipolitical bias in their interrogation of some groups and their respectful treatment of others, the Commissioners reinforced the potential acceptability of their final proposals. The groups most unlikely to be questioned about political motivations were those whose views were based on science that the Commissioners considered sound. Differences of opinion about the economic future of the country were mediated by the Commissioners’ ideas about science. In this way, the hegemonic project of the Commission process selected for technical solutions and classical common sense because the scientific approach was seen as inherently nonpolitical. Additionally, the differences in outlook expressed during the
Commission process reflected a larger debate about the nature of democracy. In their treatment of women’s groups and others, the Commissioners showed their predisposition towards liberal democracy. The Rowell-Sirois Commission process acted as a tool for building a liberal “consensus” and for excluding views along ideological and scientific lines determined by both preexisting and developing political culture and landscape.

The machinery of the Royal Commission on Dominion Provincial Relations certainly reflects the importance of experts in the policymaking process. But it also shows that by including pressure groups in a consultative process, ideological producers, including both politicians and bureaucrats, could hope to make some newer ideas popular while excluding more fundamental change from the agenda. The Commission’s recommendations enjoyed varying, but generally positive, responses from intellectuals, pressure groups, and journalists. And because the Commission process had included the testimony of pressure groups, there was a consensus. But the debate was not over. The Commission by no means ended intellectual discussions about the welfare state, the economy, or social policy. Nor could it, or did it, satisfy permanently the desires of social movements and pressure groups.

Notes

This research was first presented in slightly different form in my MA Thesis “Ideological Formation and Liberal “Consensus”: Reading the Rowell-Sirois Commission,” MA (Dalhousie University: Halifax, Nova Scotia, August 2003).


4. See Figure I.
8. Record of Proceedings, p. 9108. Upon receiving congratulations from then-acting Commission Chairman Sirois, Dafoe commented “I am an old political hand, and I exercised all the human devices, which a friend of mine said was so essential, to obtain this objective which has long been dear to me.”

10. At times the opinions of the Commissioners were quite vehemently expressed. Commissioner Sirois challenged at length and in quite testy fashion the Canadian Teachers’ Federation’s statistics on education costs in Quebec, suggesting quite aggressively that they had not accounted for Catholic schools in their calculations: Canadian Teacher’s federation presentation, Record of Proceedings, pp. 2675–2677. Minutes later, the following exchange appears to have cleared the air through an exchange of humour: “The Chairman: British Columbia is high on motion pictures. Mr. Noseworthy: Yes; they apparently are nearer to Hollywood than the rest of us. Commissioner Dafoe: A frivolous community.” Record of Proceedings, p. 2677.


18. In order to demonstrate this assertion, I have examined only a comparatively small sample of the hundreds of submissions the Commission received. I chose not to include regional and provincial discussions for two reasons. First, my argument depends on the interaction of Commissioners with presenters, and is rendered substantial and interesting by the mix of expert and nonexpert testimony. The provinces’ submissions and testimony made a great deal of use of experts. To include their submissions and testimony might have weighted the sample towards the experts. Second, the discussion of provincial rights, then as now, tends to obfuscate the more basic discussion about wealth distribution — taxation and social policy — that runs through the Commission proceedings. The groups included here were chosen in order to focus on groups with either a national scope or ones with national connections, to provide as broad a sample of the presentations as possible, and to examine testimony and submit-
sions that were particularly exemplary in exposing aspects of the assumptions held by both the groups themselves and the Commissioners. I suspect that an analysis of provincial briefs may uncover similar tensions in economic thought.


24. An increase in the influence of pressure groups by the 1930s paralleled the growth in influence of bureaucrats and experts in government offices. Thus, pressure groups enjoyed increased importance in the development of policy. But they were also directly encouraged to form by governments and bureaucrats. In response to this “public realization,” as A. Paul Pross called it, of the importance of pressure groups as a method of shaping government policy, pressure groups both professionalized and grew to national proportions. This new awareness was complemented by the realization among government officials that group involvement in policymaking could help develop publicly acceptable new policies: A. Paul Pross, *Group Politics and Public Policy* 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 1, 39, 40–41, 43, 46. In the Rowell-Sirois Commission, one example of the organic connection between experts, pressure groups, and government bureaucracies was the link between the Citizen’s Research Institute of Canada (CRIC) and the Commission. In 1937, the CRIC had commissioned a study from W.H. Wynne on taxation; Wynne went on to become one of the Commission’s experts: Shirley Tillotson, “A New Taxpayer for a New State,” in Raymond B. Blake, Penny E. Bryden, and J. Frank train, (eds.), *The Welfare State in Canada: Past, Present and Future* (Concord: Irwin Publishing, 1997), p. 145; citing the covering letter of the CRIC’s taxation study, *Special Study of Taxation and Public Expenditure in Canada*, and Sirois, *Book I*, p. 14.


28. This and all further references to location and timing of presentations from several pages preceding the main body of the *Record of Proceedings*.


41. Record of Proceedings, pp. 1098, 1101–1105. It was routine for groups to be subject to questions about their membership, structure, how long they had existed, etc. See, for instance, Record of Proceedings, pp. 1104–1105, presentation of the Catholic Minority of Manitoba; and Record of Proceedings, p. 1112, presentation of the Sound Money Economic Association, both in Winnipeg (December 1937).
42. Record of Proceedings, 2973–2981.
43. Record of Proceedings, pp. 1088, 1100–1. The CCM was represented by Frank William Russell.
44. See, for instance, the presentations of the United Farmers of Alberta in which Commissioners Rowell and Dafoe exchanged views on this rather cynical world view with Mr. Gardiner, presenting on behalf of the UFA: Record of Proceedings, pp. 6450–6455. The debate about the patronage aspect of political influence was already on the national agenda by the late 1930s: Owram, pp. 43–47, 69–70, 126–129. A view, probably justified, existed that provincial governments were more apt to use political appointments as a way to win votes and support than the federal government: James Struthers, The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920–1970 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).
45. Record of Proceedings, pp. 2646–2647 (Ottawa, January 1938).
46. Record of Proceedings, pp. 9205–9206. For some groups, efficiency was also dependent on good planning. The Canadian Nurses’ Association felt that “by stressing the preventative side… it will result in an economy both for the patient and for the state.” Record of Proceedings, p. 9009. See also, especially, Barry Ferguson, Remaking Liberalism: The Intellectual Legacy of Adam Shortt, O.D. Skelton, W.C. Clark, and W.A. Mackintosh, 1890–1925 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993); Doug Owram, The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900–1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).
47. Record of Proceedings, p. 9327.
49. Record of Proceedings, p. 3341 (Ottawa: January 1938).
51. Record of Proceedings, p. 2867.
52. Record of Proceedings (Ottawa: January 1938), p. 2372. The CMA also presented in Toronto in April of 1938.
59. Record of Proceedings (Quebec City, May 1938), p. 8317. The United Farmers of Alberta, Record of Proceedings, p. 6438; Canadian Importers and Traders Association, Record of Proceedings, p. 7036; and the Catholic Minority Association of Manitoba, Record of Proceedings, p. 1104, were cut off in this manner.
60. Record of Proceedings, pp. 8318, 8320–8321; Record of Proceedings (Quebec City: May 1938), pp. 8381, 8382.
61. Record of Proceedings, p. 8387.
64. Record of Proceedings, p. 9227.
65. Record of Proceedings (Toronto: May 1938), p. 8111. It is likely that the Housewives’ Association of Canada was a Communist Party popular front organization; in the 1930s, the Communist Party appealed to housewives, formed housewives’ associations and leagues, and encouraged housewives to organize around issues such as the price of milk: Joan Sangster, Dreams of 189
Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920–1950 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989), pp. 137–139. The Housewives' Association of Canada shared at least some of the same concerns about milk prices and other consumer issues. However, they asserted that they were nonpolitical and nonpartisan, and suggested that all laws should be consumer-oriented because such laws are inherently nonclass-based: Record of Proceedings, p. 8097; Housewives' Association of Canada, “Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations – Brief of the Housewives' Association of Canada” (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1938), pp. 1–6, 10.


67. See presentation of the National Corporatist Movement brief to a silent reception, Record of Proceedings, p. 3400.

68. Record of Proceedings, pp. 9829–9832. The Communist Party presented and was questioned over several days in Ottawa in June 1938.


70. MacDonnell was the CMA Secretary for the Industrial Relations Department: Industrial Canada (November 1937).

71. Record of Proceedings, p. 2379.


73. Record of Proceedings, p. 9837.

74. Record of Proceedings, p. 9847.

75. Record of Proceedings, p. 9849.


77. Record of Proceedings, p. 9859.

78. Record of Proceedings, pp. 9860–9861.


82. Perhaps a minor member of the Commission secretariat; his name does not appear on the list of Commission personnel.

83. Record of Proceedings, p. 9846.


89. Sirois et al, Book II, pp. 111–120.

90. Sirois et al, Book II, p. 121.

91. Sirois et al, Book II, p. 121.


98. Sirois et al, Book II, pp. 27, 129.