

Derek Bedson: Clerk of the Executive Council of Manitoba, 1958 to 1981.

Being a Thesis
Submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

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Winnipeg, Manitoba
August 2001



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**DEREK BEDSON: CLERK OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF MANITOBA,
1958 TO 1981**

BY

IAN WILSON

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree
of
MASTER OF ARTS**

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Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Derek Bedson's career as Clerk of the Executive Council of Manitoba. Special attention will be paid to his removal from office. The reasons for Derek Bedson's dismissal by the N.D.P. government of Howard Pawley were his relationship with the previous P.C. administration and his presence at the dismissal of three N.D.P.-appointed Deputy Ministers in 1977. According to Pawley, Bedson was too close to the previous administration of Sterling Lyon and had strong ties to the Progressive Conservative Party. The Clerk's presence at the dismissal of the three Deputy Ministers was viewed by some in the NDP with suspicion because it seemed to be a political act conducted before the newly elected Conservative government had been sworn in. Bedson's presence led to questions about his ability to be non-partisan since that was a requirement of his position.

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Derek Bedson's career as Clerk of the Executive Council of Manitoba, the reasons behind his removal from office, and to determine why it happened. The thesis examines his family background in order to understand the extent of his devotion to his work in the civil service and the reputation he acquired as an adept administrator. It will be shown that his abilities were not only learned traits, but also was part of a family tradition of public service. The years that Bedson attended Balliol College at Oxford University are examined because of the impact it had on him personally and professionally. They also reveal something of his temperament; even as a student he was esoteric in many ways. His diaries and letters home attest to Oxford's impact. From a personal standpoint, he was able to indulge his interests in history, religion, and politics. One of the reasons he attended Oxford was to gain entry into Canada's diplomatic service on the advice of the Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Vincent Massey. While at Oxford, Bedson became close friends with George Grant, who went on to become a renowned Canadian philosopher. Their relationship is examined in some detail because they shared similar political and spiritual values.

Bedson's duties in the federal civil service and as a private secretary to Progressive Conservative leaders George Drew and John Diefenbaker are examined in order to understand how he went from being a minor civil servant to Private Secretary for the Prime Minister of Canada within ten years. His relationships with Drew and Diefenbaker are examined in order to assess his compatibility with both men and the impact it had on his decision to return to Manitoba.

Bedson's career as Clerk of the Executive Council began in 1958 when Manitoba Premier Duff Roblin hired him. Their personal and professional relationship is examined in order to illustrate their compatibility. Both men shared beliefs in conservatism, Anglicanism, and the Monarchy. Their professional relationship is discussed in terms of the duties assigned to Bedson and the administrative structure of the Roblin government.

This thesis also examines Bedson's personal and professional relationship with Roblin's successors: Walter Weir, Ed Schreyer, and Sterling Lyon. The controversial dismissal of three N.D.P.-appointed Deputy Ministers by Lyon is also examined, as this was the most significant reason given for his dismissal by N.D.P. Premier Howard Pawley.

The dismissal of Derek Bedson as Clerk of the Executive Council was originally termed a 'reassignment' by the Pawley government. In reality, He

was not 'reassigned', but would find employment elsewhere. Bedson was initially hired by the government of Ontario to work in its overseas office in Brussels, but decided to accept an offer from the Progressive Conservative government in Saskatchewan to serve as their Clerk of the Executive Council. He would be relieved of these duties a year later following a dispute with the premier Grant Devine.

The material used in this pioneering study of a prominent public servant includes information gathered from both primary and secondary sources.

Chapter 1: Bedson's family background

Derek Bedson's family in Manitoba spanned three generations, including his father and grandfather, and pre-dated Manitoba's entry into Confederation. In order to understand the extent of his devotion to his work in the civil service, and the reputation he acquired as an adept administrator, an examination of his family history is required. He regarded his profession as part of a long family tradition of public service and he regarded any impropriety as an anathema. It is ironic therefore that Bedson was dismissed because of perceived impropriety. This examination is relevant when stating that impropriety was not the real reason for his dismissal. Bedson had a strong record of initiative and dedication to duty, and he regarded this as a family tradition.

Derek Bedson's father, Kenneth Campbell Bedson, and his grandfather, Samuel Lawrence Bedson, had achieved wide recognition in the military and the civil service respectively. The Bedson family originally came from England where Samuel Bedson was born in 1842. His father was in the British Army serving with the 16th Regiment of Foot, a regiment Samuel himself would later join. The regiment, along with Bedson, was transferred to Lower Canada in 1861. Nine years later the 16th Foot were sent back to England, but he stayed behind. Bedson joined the newly-formed 2nd

Battalion (Quebec Rifles), was given the rank of quarter-master sergeant, and accompanied an expedition to the North West led by Colonel Garnet Wolseley that served as the administrative force for the region.

The soldiers left the following year while Bedson stayed on to take charge of prisoners at Lower Fort Garry. By 1874, the first federal penitentiary in Manitoba was located there and he had become its warden. When a new federal penitentiary was opened in Stony Mountain in 1877, Bedson was named its warden. Despite having no training related to the penal system, he was successfully relying on his military background and his own initiative. As the warden at Stony Mountain in 1877, Bedson saw the need to improve the conditions of the prisoners in his charge. This included schooling for the illiterate. Federal inspectors praised him in their annual reports. In 1881, one report noted that, “The discipline is as near perfection as it could well be, and excites the admiration of every visitor.”¹

His success led the federal government to temporarily appoint him warden of St. Vincent de Paul Penitentiary near Montreal. In the fall of 1881, “discipline...had become impaired” which led the government to hire Bedson to restore order and “smooth the way for the Warden about to be appointed.”²

¹ *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (vol.XII), pp.74-5

² *Ibid.*

He held the position for five weeks and successfully restored order to the institution. In 1885, a rebellion in the North-West had broken out and Bedson was again summoned for duty. This time he served as chief transport officer under the command of Major-General Frederick Middleton, commander of military operations during the rebellion. Bedson performed front-line duties such as scouting even though he was a non-combatant. He commanded the steamer *Northcote* which carried supplies to the troops at Fish Creek and Batoche. His work received praise from General Middleton and others involved in the conflict.

Samuel Bedson was more than just an ex-soldier turned civil servant as his interests extended beyond the parameters of his occupation. He was socially active as warden at Stony Mountain hosting with his wife a litany of distinguished guests. For their pleasure, as well as his, he had built a six-hole golf course, a curling rink, a racetrack, established a hunting club, and a private zoo where he kept a herd of buffalo. By 1890, his wife passed away and soon after he remarried. That year, he was named an aide-de-camp to Governor-General Lord Stanley. Nearly a year later Bedson resumed his duties at Stony Mountain, but retired soon after due to illness.

His son, Kenneth Campbell, achieved a degree of distinction himself, but not the stature of his father. Kenneth Campbell Bedson was born in Stony

Mountain, Manitoba on July 31, 1881. Like his father and grandfather, he joined the army and served with the 2nd Canadian Military Regiment, 100th Winnipeg Grenadiers, in South Africa.

Between the Boer War and the Great War in 1914, Bedson had achieved the rank of Captain while a member of the 34th Fort Garry Horse. He enlisted shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in Europe and was transferred into the 8th Battalion for overseas service. During the war, Bedson attained the rank of Major by April, 1916, and Lieutenant- Colonel by September of that year. As Lieutenant- Colonel, he was attached to 1st Division Headquarters, was named 'Town Major' of Bousincourt, then sent back to 1st Division Headquarters. The following year saw Bedson temporarily take command of the 18th Canadian Reserve Battalion (Manitoba). He would spend the rest of the war as commander of the 18th as well as taking part in instructional tours both in Great Britain and France.

Bedson had been brought to the attention of a Secretary of State for War for valuable services rendered in connection with the War on August 7, 1917. He retired from the military on October 4, 1919, having served as the Overseas Representative for the Soldiers Land Settlement Board of Canada based in London. Over a year later, he was awarded the Legion D'Honneur (Chevalier) by the Premier of the French Republic, Georges Clemenceau.

While he was based in London, his son Derek was born on October 21, 1920. It was at least ten months before the Bedsons would return to Manitoba. Derek Bedson attended Grosvenor School, Robert H. Smith Junior High School, and Kelvin Technical High School before moving on to the University of Manitoba. It was around this time that he began, albeit infrequently, to keep an account of his daily activities.

These accounts provide both a tremendous insight into his personality and his remarkable attention to detail. One early example was entitled 'A Day in 1940' in which he described his day at the university. Although quite lengthy, it indicates his attention to detail and his sense of self. Bedson wrote:

Arose at the usual 7:30 and dressed as immaculately as usual with perhaps a bit more 'eclat'. Did don my new chocolate brown britches, mighty fine I am told. After partaking in a mighty satisfying breakfast, I seized my briefcase and donned my new coat and hat, mighty fine I am told. The stopping-place of the cumbersome tram was soon reached by much twinkling feet. I took the first University tram - mighty trim in its new coat of paint. There was a spirited conversation down the aisle between several comely maidens - each of them trying to catch the eye of a student who was standing in front of them. He, being sick of their repeated whisperings and hysterical gigglings, seized a ball of wool from one of them and passed it down the row of people on that side of the tram to the shrieks and exclamations of all the females present. When finally we arrived at the University, and I was putting my coat in my locker, one of my friends on the faculty council came up to me and told me how highly I was esteemed among the students for my brilliant work, all mighty fine and I well-pleased. The classes went as usual - the professors being entirely dull as usual, save for Professor Fieldhouse who was busy telling us how wonderful had been his advice to the late Prime Minister, when a Jew in the front row did ask him his opinions on the question of Hebrew minorities in Zululand! At lunch time, I did enjoy my huge trunkful of bologna sandwiches and also my fine slice of garlic loaf by which I had the whole table to myself, until Mr.Kibitsky and Miss Ruthie Lurcher brought their sacks of kosher and boiled eggs to sit at my table. I had a most violent desire to retch as Miss Lurcher shook the dandruff from her carrot-

red curls and applied her fulsome-red lips to a large and luscious forkful of cold macaroni which she had wrapped in tissue paper inside her purse. After a mighty refreshing lunch, I spent some time studying in the library, sitting between two comely wenches who did insist on leaning around me and whispering about the handsome English professor, Mr. Glamour, and about their 'purr-fect' time on Friday night. Then I did go down to my locker to put on my coat - mighty becoming to me I was told, only to find that some monster had pushed dried orange peel through the slats in the door! On the way to catch the tram I passed the common room where 78 worthy students were grovelling on the floor with a pair of dice and a heap of coppers. The streetcar was crowded but I managed to get a seat beside a humble second year student whom I soon crushed with a few brilliant remarks in French, Latin, and German. Thus ended another day - mighty fine I believe.³

A year after he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 1941, Bedson entered the military and joined the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps. His training took place in Gordon Head, British Columbia which he described as a "virtual prison", adding, "I might as well be in England as out here."⁴ Shortly after completing his training, Bedson was sent overseas. In his last letter home before his overseas deployment, his sentimental side was quite apparent. He acknowledged that the letter would be censored, but "All I need say is that time will lie heavy until we are together again as one family as in those glorious days at Victoria Beach in past years."⁵

While stationed in England with the R.C.A.S.C., Bedson continued to write home, occasionally offering glimpses of his legendary wit: "Do you think that it would be a good idea to volunteer for the Army of occupation

³ Derek Bedson, 1940

after the war? One is always assured of splendid treatment in the Army! The current promotions leave one speechless at the disregard of ability and catering to “sound” men. When will one’s party come to the fore one wonders?”⁶

In and around the first week of June 1944, Bedson managed to write three letters home. The first, dated June 5th recounted a visit he had with his Aunt Stella and a rumor he had heard that, due to invasion preparations, mail would be stopped. Further on in the letter, Bedson discusses his mother’s plans to return to England after the war suggesting that “If you could get a decent home in England and bring Joy (his sister) to school, I think that we as a family could set roots down into our native soil quite easily, after the long drought in the Liberal desert.”⁷ These plans, however, came to nothing. Bedson’s duties with the R.C.A.S.C. continued up until 1946, but he never revealed the nature of these duties in his letters home or his diaries. By that time, he had secured permission to attend Oxford University, having been advised by Vincent Massey that it would help him immensely in his attempts at securing employment in the Canadian Diplomatic Service. The fact that he

⁴ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson (mother) May 15, 1942

⁵ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson October 28, 1942

⁶ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 20, 1945

⁷ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson June 5, 1944

was determined to enter the public service years before he actually did clearly shows his calculating nature.

Chapter 2: Bedson at Oxford

The two years that Derek Bedson spent at Oxford University not only set him on course for a career in the civil service, but also had a major impact on his personal development. During that time, he indulged himself in his personal passions: history and religion. Bedson's political awareness was sharpened by conversations with fellow students discussing issues of the day. All of these things are detailed in his letters home and his diaries. This period in his life is examined because it clearly indicates the values he held, spiritual and political. In his letters home, he proudly described his experiences at Oxford. In January 1945, he wrote to his mother, telling her that:

The great occasion yesterday was the writing of 'collections' the College terminal examinations. These have nothing to do with the final University exams or 'schools' but are written for the benefit of the tutors so that they may discover how each undergraduate is progressing in his studies. I had to write four essays in history out of a total of twenty options: the choice was generous because scarcely any two people cover the same ground in any particular term. That is the great benefit of the tutorial system, i.e. the personal supervision accorded to each undergraduate in contrast to the North American system of mass classes and 'regurgitated' lecture notes at examination time. I cannot imagine whether or not my essays were a success, but I determinedly cut the available three hours into four equal periods and confined each essay into one of these periods. Thus I was able to complete the four questions I had selected whereas many others launched into such comprehensive theses that they were lucky to finish two of the essays demanded.⁸

He believed, however, that he would not learn the result of his "collections"

⁸ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 20, 1945

unless his tutor would casually mention it during their weekly sessions.⁹

While at Balliol College, Bedson's letters home most often centred on the weather, his studies, and his social activities. In January 1945, he wrote that he was devoted to both studying and staying warm. He added that "People have been skating on the Cherwell River of late, but I have not felt suitably clad to indulge in such vigorous (albeit 'typically Canadian') diversions!"¹⁰ Bedson's battle with the elements included continually wearing his heavy overcoat, especially in the Bodleian library.

The second winter he spent at Oxford, his fourth in England, was the worst he ever experienced. Bedson wrote that the temperatures had constantly remained below the freezing point during the first week of 1946 in spite of the fact there was no snow in sight. As he pointed out, "No doubt, one would not remark the chill in a centrally heated house but in any primitive heating arrangement, the want of warmth in all parts of any room is very keenly felt."¹¹

In addition to staying warm, Bedson spent much of his time studying during his first winter at Oxford. His letters home mention some of his curriculum, but not in great detail. In January 1946, he wrote that he attended

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

a lecture on English History (1455 to 1509) at Hertford College. Rather than mention the substance of the lecture, he complains bitterly about the lack of seating in the room and the ink in his pen having run out. He did mention, however, that he had to write the College terminal exams. Bedson was not confident in his preparation as “I have not yet acquired the tremendous background of reading, which is to be required of good students.”¹² He reassured himself, as well as his mother, by pointing out that these College exams were merely for the guidance of the tutors and did not have any influence upon the University Schools exams which as he said are written at the end of one’s first year.

Bedson was also disappointed in a tutorial as a fellow student took up the whole time in reading his essay and discussing it. He himself was limited to comments as his session had extended into the lunch hour. Bedson also was unsure if he had accomplished much by the third week of his term. In his opinion, this was due to the congenial atmosphere at Oxford, which explained why many undergraduates are tempted to spend more time socializing rather than studying. Although he had yet to be assigned a tutor for political science, he took the initiative by attending lectures by Professor Gough of Oriel

¹¹ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 4, 1946

¹² Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 18, 1946

College on Hobbes and Rousseau. Bedson said that he learned next to nothing on Aristotle from his lecturer, the prominent liberal theorist Baron Alexander Dunlop Lindsay of Birker, the Master of Balliol College, and that he would have been better off with an Aristotle lecture from Gough. In his words, "One is expected to be a mind reader in many matters around this varsity."¹³

By the end of March 1946, Bedson wrote that he had accumulated so many notes and summaries that he was unsure of how he would find the time to review them all in preparation for University examinations. He admitted that he had no idea how difficult studying would be adding that note taking must include "a proper assimilation and collection of the facts gleaned from books."¹⁴ Bedson stated that this was the most difficult task he faced and how the tutorial system exposes this weakness. He compared his experience at Oxford to the University of Manitoba as follows:

Here I must discover each fact and period of History for myself, while at the University of Manitoba I was able to do quite well by taking copious notes and pouring them forth upon various examination papers. This revelation will not shock you, I am sure, but it will give you an idea of the great transformation to which any mind has had to accommodate itself from my transition from Army to Varsity.¹⁵

¹³ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 27, 1946

¹⁴ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson March 29, 1946

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Although he was devoted to his studies, Bedson did find time to socialize. He often visited relatives and family friends, but he also made time for new friends. His roommate George Grant had a sister named Charity who was a senior United Nations Refugee Relocation Agency official in the American occupation zone of Germany. While having tea with them, Bedson learned that looting was prevalent and that American troops were becoming mutinous in an attempt to quicken the pace of repatriation. Bedson believed that if U.S. President Harry Truman did not put a stop to it, the Americans would withdraw from a practical role in European politics as it did following the First World War. He reacted to the reports of conditions in post-war Europe by stating:

It is a scandal that only 75 per cent of U.N.R.R.A. supplies reach their destination - the rest being pilfered 'en route' through insufficient guarding. It is a comfort to know that most human problems resolve themselves eventually, but one does not like to think that this one will be terminated by atom bombs.¹⁶

He was also distressed by the inability of man to "avert the disasters foreseen," adding "What a world and what a prospect for the "great new age" of which we have heard so much of in later years."¹⁷

On another occasion, he met up with friends and discussed the relative

¹⁶ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 12, 1946

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

merits and demerits of Fascism and Communism. His friends maintained that Communism, of itself, was a much better ideology than Nazism and not to be seen except as the means of improving people from above rather than by their conscious democratic choice. Bedson, however, believed that "Hitler was less pernicious than Uncle Joe, if only because his system lacked the devilish subtlety and quasi-plausibility of the Communists."¹⁸ They all agreed that the atom bomb only complicated the debate. The discussion left Bedson feeling that:

Nigel and his contemporaries were reaching a more mellow stage of political discernment than they evidently possessed in the years before the war. Whereas they were the young radicals of the extreme Labour Party, they have now come to the conclusion that there is some good in all parties and that socialism may be brought into effect by the progressive Tories rather more completely than by the ultra conservative trade unionists. I am cynical enough to see young people in the transitional stage between Socialism at twenty. Conservatism at thirty.¹⁹

In his letters home, Bedson would write about his plans to go into the civil service. He once wrote that:

I have not yet heard from Mr. Massey concerning my plans, but I hope he will do something positive on my behalf to make my post-graduate career slightly more than it appears to be at present. I cannot allow a needless worry to have any effect upon my existence here, but I must take all possible steps to create as secure a future immediately when I return to Canada.²⁰

The possibility of his becoming a candidate for election was ruled out, as he

¹⁸ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 26, 1946

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 24, 1946

believed that he would need a comfortable income for that to happen.

During the years he spent at Oxford, Bedson kept informal diaries of his activities. These diaries are informal in the sense that they were written on foolscap rather than a notebook. In these diaries, he discusses his travels around the English countryside, his extra-curricular interests, his lectures, and his opinions on the issues of the day. His main interest seemed to be church crawling, a reflection of his spiritual beliefs, which were strongly traditional and showed his sense of what was “proper.”

On one occasion in 1946, Bedson travelled to Peterborough and visited its cathedral which he said “possesses a minimum of ugly post-Reformation memorials and has the simple tomb of Queen Katherine of Aragon.”²¹ Accompanied by a friend, he also travelled to the town of Oundle. There, he saw its public school and a statue of Peter Scott, the son of British explorer Robert Scott. The statue was of him as a child and was done by his mother. She had the statue set up at the school before her son went there. Another oddity was the transcription, which read “Here I am. Send me.”²² Bedson’s overall impressions of the town were favourable. He wrote, “the building of all the houses and shops in greystone has given it an undistinguished air

²¹ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’, September 1, 1946

²² *Ibid.*

which Victorian brick structure can never possess.”²³ He added that the parish church “has a superb tower with slender spire – a prominent local landmark.”²⁴ On a later visit, he commented that the proportion of pews marred the proportions of the church.

Following his second visit to Oundle, Bedson travelled to the village of Tansor where he made a point of stopping in to see its church. He wrote, “It was perfect within as well as without – the brasses, alters, and channel seats being all mediaeval and in praiseworthy condition.”²⁵ Bedson left Tansor for Fotheringay where the Castle that held Mary Queen of Scots as a prisoner once stood. He added that “the tremendous church is but a spacious nave of a college of secular priests founded by the Duke of York and his cousin Henry III.”²⁶ At the time of Bedson’s visit, it served as a parish church to a few nearby cottages. In his opinion, it was frighteningly base inside and required a decent reredos (ornamental screen) to relieve the colourless impression. He also took the time to visit the Jesus Church at the West End of Oundle. Bedson thought it was a “queer parish church”, which had been designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1879. I was built in the form of a Greek cross with a

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ September 2, 1946

²⁶ *Ibid.*

domed lantern forming the chief part of the structure. He also paid a visit to Little Gidding, the home of the monastic community established by Nicholas Ferrar in the reign of Charles I, and “most notable for the example of holiness set by the men and women who lived during the troubles of the Civil War.”²⁷

A couple of days later, he went to the town of Stamford Baron that “has one of the eleven churches of this important East Anglican city which rose to a position of wealth during the troubled years of the fifteenth century.”²⁸ He wrote that the church called St. George’s was completely rebuilt by the Garter King at Arms in the middle of the century to act as the temporary chapel of the knights “until Windsor once again became available.”²⁹ It did when Edward IV constructed St. George’s Chapel there some years later.

Bedson examined the largest church in the town, St. Mary’s, and found that it had “a superb spire and well-kept interior.”³⁰ Among the other churches that impressed him were the All Saint’s Church and St. John’s Church. He wasn’t, however, impressed with the Church of St. Clement as the galleries, panels, and reredos had been painted a vivid shade of blue.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ September 3, 1946

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, he noted that the whole building had been completely rebuilt by the Victorians and preserved few mediaeval possessions except for its tower, font, and plate. Another church of interest to Bedson was St. Martin's where the Cecils of the Exeter branch of the family were interred. He added that Burleigh House was still the home of the oldest living descendent of the Lord Burleigh who served as a minister to Queen Elizabeth.³¹

On the way to the town of Achurch, Bedson stopped to see Barnwell Church and Castle. He believed that the church was on par with many examples of mediaeval parish churches found in Britain. The Jacobean manor house beside the extensive ruins of the small castle was the country house of the then Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.³²

Bedson had also made a point of visiting the village of Aldwinkle and its two churches. According to him, they were the churches where two noted English literary figures were baptized. The Elizabethan writer Thomas Fuller was baptized at Aldwinkle All Saints while poet John Dryden was baptized at Aldwinkle St. Peter. Bedson pointed out that both churches had formed one living with Achurch thus resulting in the renting out of the Achurch rectory of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. This shows Bedson's devotion to the

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

“appropriate” – a characteristic of him. His intolerance of the “inappropriate” in this field paralleled his attitude toward inappropriateness in the civil service in later years.

While at Oxford, Bedson kept up an impressive social schedule in the midst of his studies. Among his activities was his involvement with two religious groups, the O.U.C.U. and the Oxford friends of the Franciscans. On one occasion, Bedson met the secretary of the O.U.C.U. for tea and discussed “various ecclesiastical characters known to us.”³³ He also had the idea that Church Disestablishment should be a discussion point for the group in the coming academic year to which the secretary agreed. Bedson’s involvement with the Oxford friends of the Franciscans did not extend past attending meetings. He recalled one meeting which took place at St. Thomas’ Convent with a good number of young men and women. It was meetings like this, he thought, that allowed people from other colleges to get to know each other.

Bedson would also go out to the cinema or the theatre with friends. Either before or after a show, they would stop in at an establishment called the “Stowaway” for dinner. Among the films he saw was a French classic called “Quoi des Brunes.” He recalled that it was “fearfully sordid” with all but one of the principal characters having died in various ways before the

end. It only served to reinforce Bedson's scorn for "the accepted English respect for French culture and morals!"³⁴ He did, however, find one French film called "La Fin du Jour" somewhat enjoyable as it had splendid acting and some excellent characters, but it was "as sordid as most pre-war French films were."³⁵ Bedson also managed to see a theatrical production of "Anthony and Cleopatra" although he was disappointed with it as, amongst other things, the costumes were Elizabethan-Roman and looked quite sombre.

Bedson's tutorials and lectures were never far from his thoughts as he wrote about his daily activities in his diaries. His studies consisted of lectures on the Greek philosopher Aristotle, the Roman poet and storyteller Ovid, Stubb's *Charter* with Oxford scholar May McKisack, Anglo-Saxon history tutorials with Richard W. Southern, and Colonial History with Jack Simmons. Bedson found his work on Stubbs *Charter* to be interminable, but he did enjoy attending McKisack's lectures on it twice a week. He had previously met her at the history seminar of Professor Frederick Powicke in Oriel College. At that seminar, she had read a paper on "Samuel David as an Historian." Bedson had expressed an interest in the subject much to her delight. As a result, they often met socially.

³³ Derek Bedson 'Diaries' October 26, 1946

³⁴ Derek Bedson 'Diaries' November 16, 1946

That sort of attention was not forthcoming from his tutors Southern and Simmons. Bedson believed that Southern “has the keen understanding mind of a good mediaevalist and he can teach quite well as long he can be opened up by his undergraduates.”³⁶ He does not, however, have much to say about Simmons. His tutor for Colonial History had been appointed Beit lecturer in the history of the British Empire in 1943. He refers to him only in regards to tutorial sessions and handing in assignments.

In addition to academic lectures, Bedson attended many lectures on a variety of subjects. Among them was a meeting at Keble College on the work of the University’s Mission to Central Africa. The Bishop of Nyasaland gave the main address. He found the meeting to be “most illuminating on the great work of the organization in leading the natives of eastern Africa towards the better part of western civilization.”³⁷

Bedson also went to a weekly meeting of the University Conservative Association to hear Viscount Hinchingsbrooke, heir to the Earl of Sandwich and a notably right of centre Conservative MP, speak on party policy. It was also the first political meeting he had attended since coming to Oxford. He found that Hinchingsbrooke spoke very well, answering an odd assortment of

³⁵ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ November 2, 1946

³⁶ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ December 3, 1946

questions in a forthright manner with certainty, never losing his poise or good humor. He also noted that “some of the questioners were rather Hebraic little men with impertinent worries about Conservative financial policy.”³⁸ A meeting of a different sort took place in Balliol College when Bedson was introduced to Norman Robertson, the new Canadian High Commissioner. The meeting also included other Canadians at Balliol. He states that the whole affair was rather uncomfortable, though he does not explain why. Despite that, Robertson himself came across as a charming man, one who probably had ideals.³⁹

Bedson had also made plans to attend a meeting involving other Christians at the Town Hall. The purpose of this meeting was to “bring Christian opinion to bear upon the affairs of state” with regard to German reconstruction. He believed that many of these Christian leaders were more concerned with conditions in Germany than their own dioceses, but the meeting had good intentions.⁴⁰

In the first week of February 1947, he attended a series of addresses presented by the University Mission given by Bishop Steven Neill. Each night

³⁷ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ November 10, 1946

³⁸ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ November 22, 1946

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ November 26, 1946

he would speak on one aspect of Christianity. The topic the night Bedson saw him was “Sins - Ancient and Modern.” Neill’s address focused on the relation of sex to the Christian. He found it to be honest and sincere. The large crowd that showed up to see Bishop Neill gave proof of his reputation as an orator.

Around that time, Bedson wrote his Canadian Civil Service exam in London. It was a three hour exam lasting from nine until noon. The memory of that exam seems to have faded quickly as he does not mention it in his diaries. He does, however, write about the Civil Service essay question that he wrote that afternoon from two until five. On the latter test, the candidates were given a choice of eight questions. Out of those eight, Bedson selected “The Influence of Geography on History.” In the three hours it took to write, he would pause on occasion “to rest and reflect whether I believed a word of the thesis I was propounding.”⁴¹

A month later, he decided to write a “Mock Schools” paper on political science that he found quite difficult, as he believed that he did not have a full grasp of the subject matter. Nevertheless, he felt he should make an effort “if only to find out how very badly I might do under the worst possible conditions.”⁴² That afternoon, Bedson had to write another “Mock Schools”

⁴¹ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ February 5, 1947

⁴² Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ March 10, 1947

paper, this time on Stubbs *Charter*. Although exhausted, he had managed to answer three questions. He had also managed to avoid having to take the French and Latin reading tests unseen as is normally the case for those taking history. His tutor Southern believed that he would be excused on the grounds of war service and senior standing. The latter point referred to the fact that he already had a degree from the University of Manitoba.

The flu had prevented Bedson from writing a third “Mock Schools” paper that prompted him to seek permission from the Dean of Balliol College to reschedule it. The Dean agreed that he could write the paper under Schools conditions whenever he wished. He decided to write it the following morning. His diaries, however, give no indication that he wrote it the next day, what subject it was in, or if he wrote it at all.

Bedson began writing his final examinations at the Examination Schools on June 5, 1947. Bedson wrote that the wide variety of questions available required him to select the ones he would answer very carefully. The following week, he wrote an exam on Stubb’s *Charter* which he found very easy and fair, but hinted that he may have done very poorly. His third exam was on political science, which he believed would reveal a lack of knowledge more so than his previous ones in history. Lacking any confidence in his performance, he was glad to have finished it. From there,

Bedson went on to write his exam in colonial history that afternoon. It was the first half of a “special subject” paper entitled “British Colonial History, 1830-1860.” Again, he had doubts about his performance. The following day he completed the second half consisting of four essays. Bedson went on to graduate with a B.A. “Shortened Examination, Part II.” The shortened examination means that he was part of a contingent of ex-soldiers who did the degree in two years rather than three. It was a second-class honours degree in Modern History.⁴³ This marked the end of Bedson’s academic career.

His original intent when he arrived at Oxford was to enter the Canadian civil service, but he had considered changing his mind on at least two occasions. The first time was two years earlier when he considered staying in Britain. The second was shortly after he had completed his work at Oxford. Bedson had seriously contemplated a career in the military over one in the civil service. He had received his confirmation of acceptance by the Canadian Army although it was subject to confirmation of the medical board. He also believed that a military career would be more congenial than one in External Affairs.⁴⁴ Bedson did not, however, give any indication as to why he felt this

⁴³ Oxford University Calendar, 1949, p.239

⁴⁴ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ June 12, 1947

way or why he decided to stick to his original plans.

Bedson's Oxford experience gave him the opportunity to enrich himself both academically and spiritually. His reason for going to Oxford was in order to ensure employment in the Canadian Diplomatic Service, but he also had improved himself as a student and indulged himself in his passion for history and religion. Bedson's political awareness was sharpened in conversations with fellow students. His closest friend George Grant shared his moral and ethical values. Judging by his thoughts expressed in his letters and diaries, at this time Bedson could not accept impropriety of any kind.

Chapter 3: George Grant

While at Oxford, Bedson formed a lifelong friendship with George Grant, who would become a renowned Canadian philosopher. In his letters home and his diaries, Bedson frequently mentions Grant. The two of them would often discuss politics and religion, usually agreeing on many issues. They were so close that Bedson served as Grant's best man at his wedding in 1947. Grant would later co-dedicate his book *Lament For A Nation* to Bedson. It is important to examine their friendship as they shared many of the same political and religious values. Their correspondence in the years after they left Oxford indicates a strong sense of morality and ethics with intolerance towards impropriety.

Grant had once described Bedson as "a strange Winnipegger whose best qualities are his kind heart and decency - his worst an ineffectiveness."⁴⁵ In one of his letters home, Bedson wrote that Grant "is not settling down very well...He spends too much time shopping, visiting cinemas, and failing to concentrate."⁴⁶ In spite of these critiques, they got on extremely well.

⁴⁵ William Christian George Grant: *A Biography*, p.121

⁴⁶ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 12, 1946

Bedson had also gone to several meetings and addresses with Grant as well as those mentioned earlier. They had gone to a meeting of the Origen Society, a group for theological students, where a Roman Catholic priest read a paper on St. Thomas Aquinas. Bedson thought it was a good presentation, but his lack of knowledge about the vocabulary used did not allow him to fully appreciate it. The Origen Society was under the patronage of leading religious figures at Oxford such as Canon Eric Moscall from Christ Church College and Dr. Austin Marsden Farrer, an ordained Anglican priest.

Bedson and Grant went to another meeting of the Origen Society where both Dr. Farrer and Dom Gregory Dix were present. According to Bedson, Farrer was Grant's personal hero and was enthralled, especially with the discussion that followed.⁴⁷ Farrer was a British theologian and biblical scholar who accepted classic metaphysics (the theoretical philosophy of existence and knowledge) as opposed to positivism (philosophical system recognizing only positive facts and observable phenomena) and process philosophy (following a course of action). Dix was an Anglo-Catholic liturgical scholar who wrote *The Shape Of The Liturgy*, which was published in 1945. In his book, he discusses the four parts of the "eucharistic action", the act of giving thanks.

Both Bedson and Grant attended a meeting of the Student Christian Movement (S.C.M.) at Balliol College. The S.C.M. began as a loose network of students dedicated to missionary work overseas. It was committed to social and political awareness and to being ecumenical (seeking worldwide Christian unity). The S.C.M. also believed that students should apply their objectivity as much to their faith as to their studies. The speaker was an ardent young Communist whose topic was the faith of Communism. Grant was of the opinion that they should hear his "apologia."⁴⁸ Bedson added that the speaker was the President of the University Communist Party "supposedly brilliant in the usual dishonest way of Marxists."⁴⁹ They shared an admiration of the social atmosphere at Oxford where people from different parts of the world could interact and amusement at those who did not appreciate it. On one occasion, a Canadian medical colonel wanted to see a Canadian Club created at Oxford which left them amused rather than angered. Bedson points out that "neither George nor I cling to the other as an only possible friend in an alien atmosphere. We share many of the same friends and have a great deal in common (matters peculiar to Canada), but we would not stand for any national considerations to rope us off from our dear

⁴⁷ Derek Bedson 'Diaries' November 2, 1946

⁴⁸ Derek Bedson 'Diaries' November 5, 1946

friends.”⁵⁰

Neither would the Master of Balliol College. Bedson remembered having tea with Grant and another Canadian thus forming an all-Canadian party, which he believed, would have horrified the Master. He did not like people of the same nationality clinging together much to Bedson and Grant’s amusement. Bedson again states:

I do not think that either George or I relies on the other for the fullness of friendship. There are certain things which we can discuss most suitably with each other as Canadians, but we realize that the greatness of the College lies in its readiness to be friendly with all the undergraduates in residence.⁵¹

Bedson and Grant also shared a dislike of overt Canadianism common among Canadians they encountered. Grant had met by chance three men from Winnipeg who invited him to tea with the Dean of Christ Church. He had found it to be an ordeal as he hated “the horrible Winnipeg crew” especially one member whom he found “aggressively democratic and narrowly Canadian.”⁵² Bedson himself had no use for what he called “false Canadian egalitarianism.” By his own admission he had an adverse reaction to the “sordidness of the middleclass mentality.”⁵³

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson March 27, 1946

⁵¹ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson February 9, 1946

⁵² Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson February 7, 1946

⁵³ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson January 30, 1947

Bedson had an admiration of the Franciscans and attended a meeting to hear of their work in the East End of London among the coloured seamen in Stepney. He was told of the awful conditions they lived in which led him to conclude “the complete immorality of that part of London is based on an equally complete paganism.”⁵⁴ He added that the friars have been in East London for just over a year, but they feel that their efforts have already gained them some kind of acceptance as members of the coloured community. Many young people, he noted, were interested in the work and that is why the Franciscans stay in close contact with English public schools and universities. Grant himself knew only too well of the conditions in London’s East End as he had served as an air raid warden in Stepney from 1940 to 1942.

Their discussions covered a wide range of topics. One centered on the decision of the British Labour government to ration bread and cake as of July, 1946. Bedson was shocked by their decision to allow wheat stocks to be decreased to the point where rationing became necessary. He pointed out that Britain had survived two world wars without rationing, but Labour mismanagement after only a few months in power had led to this situation. Bedson added that when he used this argument on Grant, it drove him into

⁵⁴ Derek Bedson ‘Diaries’ November 5, 1946

hysterics as he was a socialist and had to take a dispassionate view of the matter.⁵⁵ Even conversations between Grant and Bedson's aunt Stella Blake took on a similar tone as each subject of their discussions, in Grant's opinion, led to the conclusion that Labour was to blame for everything. Bedson found himself having to mediate these discussions in order to "preserve the balance of sweetness and light."⁵⁶

In the years after they left Oxford, both Bedson and Grant advanced in their professions, the civil service and academia respectively. They continued to correspond and discuss matters pertaining to both politics and religion. In early 1959, Grant wrote to him and in glowing terms describes the virtue of loyalty stating "nobody in my life has shown me as much loyalty than you have other than Sheila."⁵⁷ Grant, who at the time was a professor at Dalhousie University, told Bedson about the arrival of C.D. Howe as its Chancellor: "The big capitalist wants at least an efficient university and he has pushed our salaries up to the point where we can live decently."⁵⁸

Education was one of the topics in this letter. Grant mused about the place of it within the United Church suggesting that it may be nothing more

⁵⁵ Derek Bedson to Eleanor Bedson June 29, 1946

⁵⁶ Derek Bedson 'Diaries' December 29, 1946

⁵⁷ George Grant to Derek Bedson January 1, 1959

than a rogue liberalism as “it does not know what education means and what it does not mean within the Trinity.”⁵⁹ In terms of religion, he had increasingly found that the distinction Catholic/Protestant was meaningless, as there were signs of Protestantism within the Catholic Church. “What held us, for instance, to Catholicism for many years was that it often expressed itself as mediaevalism and Aristotilianism, both of which have no right to the claim of being Catholic.”⁶⁰

When the federal Progressive Conservatives formed a minority government in 1957, Grant offered his congratulations to Bedson. Grant knew only too well of his friend’s conservatism and was thrilled to hear of Diefenbaker’s victory. As he stated “what I think is wonderful is that you having had the courage to follow your principles when the Conservatives were weak and when all the young men who wanted prestige laughed at you, now will reap the reward of that courage and loyalty.”⁶¹

Two years later, Grant wrote Bedson another letter offering his congratulations on the victory of Duff Roblin’s provincial Conservatives in Manitoba’s general election. In this letter, Grant tells his friend how he has

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ George Grant to Derek Bedson June 13, 1957

admired many of the statements by Roblin on many subjects. In his opinion, these statements give the impression of a real conservative, not at all a person who served a class interest.⁶² He was afraid that Diefenbaker's Finance Minister Donald Fleming increasingly gave the impression that the rule of the business community is the chief end of decisions. Although he did not give specific examples or explain his rationale, Grant was saddened that in North America politicians who serve the business community might get farther in power than real conservatives.

Both Grant and Bedson shared concern about the Anglican Church and its rightful place in education. The former expressed a desire to "show Christians outside the universities to know what gates of evil these secular universities can be."⁶³ He points out that educated Christians have a traditional respect for universities because they founded them and it is therefore difficult for them to recognize that they can be "sources of evil as well as good."⁶⁴

Grant mentions that there was going to be a provincial election in Nova Scotia and expected provincial Conservative leader Robert Stanfield to be re-elected Premier. He thought that Stanfield was "a decent and just man but a

⁶² George Grant to Derek Bedson November 14, 1959

singularly ungenerous one who is not a real conservative because he instinctively identifies himself with the privileged economically. I would not like to see him leader of the national party because of this narrowness.”⁶⁵

Around the time of the 1962 federal election, Grant wrote to Bedson expressing his fear of the Liberals returning to power. He was especially shocked to see many of the Ontario establishment campaigning against Diefenbaker as if they had a divine right to govern Canada. Grant believed if the Liberals were elected, “they plan to sell us to the U.S. lock, stock, and barrel.”⁶⁶ He was hoping for a minority government with the N.D.P. supporting the Conservatives “so that the Liberals can’t get in and do what Dief did in 1958.”⁶⁷

Following the re-election of Duff Roblin’s Conservatives in Manitoba, Grant again offered his congratulations to Bedson. He added that the defeat of the federal Conservatives was due to the fact that “the business community openly espoused the Liberal Party,” something he felt Manitoba’s Conservatives should be aware of.⁶⁸ Grant also believed that Diefenbaker

⁶⁵ George Grant to Derek Bedson June 5, 1960

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ George Grant to Derek Bedson June 18, 1962

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ George Grant to Derek Bedson June 20, 1962

had learned his lesson, that “the big capitalists are not his supporters.”⁶⁹ He himself worked for the N.D.P. as an election agent in the belief that an urban socialist party was needed.

By 1965, Grant had written his widely acclaimed book *Lament For A Nation*. In it, he stated that Canadian toryism depended upon a tradition of British conservatism that was no longer relevant in Great Britain. He also suggested that in its infancy, English-speaking conservatism was “simply a loyalty based on the flow of trade, and therefore destined to change when that flow changed.” Early settlers in Canada had a desire to create a society that placed a great deal of emphasis on order and restraint. Grant also acknowledges the importance of religion in conservatism. He stated that both Anglicans and Presbyterians believed in the importance of self-restraint that characterized the conservatism of the early leaders of British North America.⁷⁰ The monarchy was seen as a symbol of loyalty to the state, and the use of the state’s authority in political and economic spheres was an expression of conservative nationalism.

Political scientist George Perlin agreed with Grant’s views, stating that the Canadian Progressive Conservative Party and the British Conservative

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Grant *Lament For A Nation*, pp.70-1

Party had a similar ideological temperament and tradition.⁷¹ He did not accept the model of a conservative as a laissez-faire economic liberal. Perlin, however, disagreed with Grant's thoughts on Robert Stanfield. The Nova Scotia premier was held up as an example of what he thinks a real conservative is. Stanfield, according to Perlin, believed that "the fundamental principle of Canadian conservatism is a belief in the achievement of freedom through the recognition and maintenance of social order."⁷² To Perlin, Canadian conservatives see the community as an integrated whole whose members subscribe to the notion of mutual responsibility. They also believe that private or individual interests can, and should, be made subordinate to the public interest.

Historian W.L. Morton supported this view, stating that conservatism is based on respect for both authority and tradition, not on social or economic dogma. Morton also considered that Anglicanism is important for conservatism as it reinforces both tradition and social obligation allowing a Conservative Party to be open to all social classes. "Conservatives are the party of tradition, not the party of ideology. So they can keep going. They can pick up anything, including traditional liberalism. There's no countervailing

⁷¹ Perlin 'The Progressive Conservative Party' in Thorburn(ed.), p.163

⁷² Ibid

ideology.”⁷³

A struggle for control of the federal Progressive Conservative Party was underway at this time culminating in a leadership convention held in 1967. John Diefenbaker was defeated and replaced by Robert Stanfield. Grant expressed his regret to Bedson that Duff Roblin, who had been a candidate, did not win the leadership and his disappointment with the establishment's choice of Stanfield. He also expressed his disgust for Conservative strategist and Stanfield campaign organizer Dalton Camp whom he found distasteful because “he is so dominated by the need for recognition.”⁷⁴ He saw Camp's role as an “idea man” as a means of co-opting the latest idea for his own use. Grant continued his opposition to Stanfield stating that:

From my experience in Nova Scotia my worry about Stanfield is not that he is a cold and hard man (he has to be that) but that he identifies almost automatically with a certain kind of respectable property class (which indeed has certain virtues) which will not enable him to understand the issues of nationalism with sufficient clarity or imagination which they will require in the years ahead. I met Mrs. Stanfield a couple of times before she was married and she certainly would not help to lead him beyond those limitations.⁷⁵

Grant was pleased to hear that Roblin would enter federal politics he believed that the Premier of Manitoba had some understanding of this country. He had

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ George Grant April 10, 1967

been afraid that if Roblin had decided not to, “we were going to fall into the old politics when there really were no differences between the parties, so that the gradual erosion of nationalism would take place almost unnoticed.”⁷⁶

In later years, Grant’s correspondence with Bedson focused mainly on religion. The former writes to confirm the latter’s belief that “Christ’s proclamation” is supernatural. Bedson had suggested that Grant should tell the churches that Christianity is supernatural, but he felt that communicating this message would be difficult as the public in general no longer believe it.

Shortly after Bedson’s decision to leave the Anglican Church, Grant wrote to him explaining why he could not do the same. He believed that in spite of the Church’s “follies and disloyalties”; there were both practical and deeper considerations that prevented him from leaving.⁷⁷ A practical consideration was that he did not want his family to be cut off from the local parish thus severing any link between his children and the Church. A deeper consideration was Grant’s belief that both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism would pay a price for their relationship with progressive materialism. He also believed that authentic Christianity would be rediscovered through time and, possibly, great suffering.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Grant's relationship with Bedson was more than just friendship as they had deep intellectual and spiritual kinship. Grant described him as loyal and referred to him as his best and dearest friend. They believed that their respective political and religious beliefs were of a high standard, and they found deviations from these beliefs unacceptable.

⁷⁷ George Grant to Derek Bedson February 2, 1978

Chapter 4: Federal Civil Service, George Drew, and John Diefenbaker

Bedson's work in the federal civil service consisted of administration rather than policy formation, but within ten years Derek Bedson went from a minor civil servant to private secretary to the Prime Minister of Canada. His duties in that capacity were, however, mostly secretarial. The examination of this period from 1947 to 1958 indicates his ties to members of the political establishment and his compatibility with two very different Conservative Party leaders.

Bedson's first assignment with the federal government was with the Department of Mines and Resources in the Immigration Branch. While in Ottawa, he wrote his examination for permanency in the civil service. He expressed a lack of confidence in his performance, but concluded, "as long as the requisite number of pages are covered with writing, one must relax and hope vaguely for the best."⁷⁸

Within the Immigration Branch, Bedson had been assigned to the Deportations Section. He stated that, initially, his main task involved raising funds for the Ottawa Community Chest Campaign within his section. It was Bedson's responsibility "to ensure that the cards were distributed properly,

⁷⁸Derek Bedson to Kenneth and Eleanor Bedson January 29, 1948

the necessary exhortations lavished upon those who do not wish to contribute, and the resulting funds gathered in and sent to the bank.”⁷⁹ He does not mention in his letters what official business he conducted.

After two years with the Ministry of Mines and Resources, he was transferred to External Affairs, where he was a Foreign Service Officer from 1949 to 1955. From 1953 to 1955, Bedson was assigned to the Canadian delegation to the United Nations where he served as Secretary of the Delegation and Advisor at the Eighth and Ninth Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly.

By that time, he had made acquaintances with many well known and influential individuals, including such Canadian Members of Parliament as the Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester Pearson, and a former Manitoban, Sir William Stephenson. Stephenson had been in charge of British Security Coordination during the Second World War, acting as a liaison between U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. While Stephenson generally adopted a low profile after the war, he became friends with Bedson due in part to their position against returning Polish art treasures in Britain’s possession to Poland’s Communist

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

government.⁸⁰

Another prominent individual who admired Bedson's work was the former Ontario premier and current leader of the federal Progressive Conservatives, George Drew. In 1955, Drew offered him the post of Private Secretary in his office, which he gladly accepted. In their correspondence, however, no reason was given for this action. Bedson was thrilled with Drew's offer and wrote "I am at the moment more impressed by the measure of confidence you have shown me."⁸¹ In a letter to the Under - Secretary of State for External Affairs, Jules Leger, he stated that:

After nearly six years as a member of the Department, I do not find it an easy thing to submit my resignation. I believe, however, that the work I shall be doing is important and that I may be able to make a useful contribution in the new post.⁸²

George Drew arrived on the federal scene in 1948 after he contested and won the leadership of the Progressive Conservatives. As Premier of Ontario, Drew had been described as a visionary proposing a massive reconstruction of Ontario while the Second World War was still in progress. According to author Jonathan Manthorpe, "Drew talked confidently of the day when it would all be over and the people of Ontario could get down to

⁸⁰ William Stephenson to Derek Bedson June 5, 1958

⁸¹ Derek Bedson to George Drew June 7, 1955

⁸² Derek Bedson to Jules Leger June 15, 1955

the business of building the province to the economic and social level that was its destiny.”⁸³

Like Bedson, he came from a prominent background. His grandfather, also named George Drew, was a Conservative Member of Parliament in the first post-Confederation parliament. His family were United Empire Loyalists and staunchly supported Imperial and Commonwealth ties. Drew was attending the University of Toronto when hostilities in Europe broke out. He left university and joined the Canadian Army in 1914. A year later, he was sent to Europe. Having joined the reserve force as a young man, Drew rejoined it in the 1920s becoming peacetime commander of the 64th Battery, Canadian Field Artillery, rising to the rank of Lieutenant - Colonel.

During that time, he began writing books on Canadian military history. Drew was drawn into the public eye by his books and a magazine article he wrote called “The Salesmen of Death”, an indictment of private munitions manufacturers.⁸⁴ The article alone was translated into thirty languages. Like Bedson, Drew became a civil servant, having been named Ontario’s first Securities Commissioner in 1929. He held this post until 1934 when the provincial Liberal government of Mitch Hepburn dismissed him.

⁸³ Jonathan Manthorpe *The Power & The Tories: Ontario politics, 1943 to the present*, p.24

Drew became leader of the Ontario Conservatives in 1938 and was elected premier in 1943. It has been said that during his tenure as leader, he did little ideologically to encourage differences between the Liberals and the Conservatives. He stated that “Economic freedom is the essence of competitive enterprise is the foundation of our democratic system.”⁸⁵ Concerned by what he believed were infringements by the Liberals on personal liberty, he added “We believe in the widest possible measure of personal liberty consistent with law, order, and the general national welfare.”⁸⁶ Although political scientists William L. Christian and Colin Campbell had accused Drew of abandoning the “Progressive” agenda of his predecessor John Bracken in favour of a “business liberal” approach, this wasn’t the case.⁸⁷

Jonathan Manthorpe cites Drew’s “22-point” program of social and economic reforms as an example of his progressive beliefs. This program promised universal medical and dental protection, an increased mother’s allowance, and increased old age pensions. Drew also supported the creation of marketing boards for farmers, the nationalization of stockyards to

⁸⁴ *op. Cit.*, pp.30-1

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Campbell and Christian *Political Parties And Ideologies In Canada*, pp.80-1

guarantee farmers' fair prices and a reduction of taxes related to the mining industry.

Bedson had accepted the position on face value, as there had been no clear description of what his duties would be. As it turned out, those duties were literally of a secretarial nature. He sorted, prioritized, and answered correspondence for, as well as arranging appointments with the Conservative leader. In his memoirs, Conservative M.P. Donald Fleming recalled that Bedson was brought in to replace Mel Jack, who had resigned the post to enter the federal civil service. Fleming acknowledged that Drew had found Bedson's abilities and experience most helpful. He added, "one of Derek's first acts on taking over his position was to examine my filing system and methods of gathering material on subjects for use in the debates."⁸⁸ By 1956, Drew had resigned due to ill health and was replaced as leader by John Diefenbaker. The change in leadership was to have a profound impact on Bedson's position.

In 1957, Diefenbaker's Conservatives unexpectedly won the federal election, but did not have enough seats to form a majority. Nevertheless, Bedson suddenly found himself the Private Secretary to the Prime Minister of Canada. Bedson, however, found it increasingly difficult working for him. As

Conservative M.P. Heward Grafftey put it: “Bedson and Diefenbaker were not exactly soulmates. Bedson’s erudite sophistication did not make for good communications with his boss.”⁸⁹ That should have been obvious from the start as both men had tread different paths on the way to Ottawa.

Diefenbaker’s heritage was not as notable when compared to that of his predecessor and his private secretary, but there is nothing to suggest that he felt uncomfortable about it. He was born in Ontario and raised in Saskatchewan where his family homesteaded. Diefenbaker attended the University of Saskatchewan earning an MA in political science and economics before enlisting in the Canadian Army in 1916. Following his military service, he entered law school and graduated with a Bachelor of Laws in 1919. Diefenbaker began practicing criminal law in the town of Wakaw near Prince Albert and quickly became a successful criminal lawyer.

Initially, his political ambitions met with failure. Diefenbaker was a candidate in municipal, provincial, and federal elections from 1925 to 1938 and had failed to be elected every time. In 1940, he finally succeeded in getting elected to the House of Commons. He also contested the leadership of the Conservatives in 1942 and 1948 before winning it in 1956. Having won

⁸⁸ Donald Fleming *So Very Near*, p.78

⁸⁹ Heward Grafftey *Lessons From The Past*, p.35

the leadership, he began to reshape the party's direction.

Diefenbaker espoused nostalgia, a sense of history, pro-Canadianism, toryism, civil liberties, hostility to continentalism, and concern for the weak and oppressed. Throughout their history, the Conservatives consisted of both Tories and business liberals. The latter group grew in strength and became dominant in the first half of the 1900s. Diefenbaker, however, revived toryism in a significantly altered form.

This form called "democratic toryism," emerged in the United Kingdom in the late-1800's. The democratic Tory was concerned for the well being of the poor, believing that the upper strata of society had a responsibility to care for those less well off. The programs a democratic Tory advocates are aimed at increasing the security of the recipients. According to democratic toryism, the wealthy are allowed to retain their privileges so long as subsidiary benefits are given to the poor. As Diefenbaker stated:

To those who have labelled me some kind of party maverick, and claimed that I have been untrue to the great principles of the Conservative Party, I can reply that they have forgotten the traditions of Disraeli and Shaftesbury in Britain and Macdonald in Canada.⁹⁰

Although a democratic Tory at heart, Diefenbaker was also conscious of classic toryism. Like his private secretary, he was devoted to the monarchy

⁹⁰ Gad Horowitz in Ajzenstat and Smith (eds.), pp.30-3

and believed in the importance of the British Commonwealth, which encapsulated the civilizing values of the British Empire.

Bedson's stature rose quickly between 1947 and 1958 because of his performance as a public servant and private secretary. His administrative abilities were noticed by federal Progressive Conservative leader George Drew and Cabinet Ministers in the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker. Bedson was very compatible with Drew given their respective backgrounds and conservative beliefs. This was, according to Grafftey at least, not the case with Diefenbaker.⁹¹ These perceived differences were magnified by their backgrounds, not their beliefs.

Chapter 5: Duff Roblin

The election of Manitoba's first Conservative government in forty three years led by Duff Roblin, grandson of the last Conservative premier of Manitoba, paved the way for Derek Bedson to return to his native province. This chapter examines the personal and professional relationship of both men in order to illustrate their compatibility. It also explains the administrative structure of Roblin's government in order to illustrate the extent of Bedson's duties as Clerk of the Executive Council.

Duff Roblin, like his clerk, came from a prominent family. His ancestors in the years before Confederation had been members of the assemblies in Upper Canada and the Province of Canada. Both men were also strong conservatives, Anglicans, and monarchists. Roblin cited these three factors as reasons for their compatibility.⁹²

The premier's conservatism was influenced by the likes of Lord Shaftesbury, William Wilberforce, Benjamin Disraeli, Edmund Burke, and John A. Macdonald. Shaftesbury was a British Member of Parliament in the nineteenth century that led the factory reform movement in the House of

⁹¹ Grafftey, p.35

⁹² Duff Roblin interview November 21, 1998

Commons. His efforts led to legislation that prevented women and children from working in coalmines, and very young children from working in factories. Shaftesbury was profoundly interested in people and believed that they should have a greater share of the comforts of life. He believed that through Christianity, provided its principles were accepted and acted upon, this could be accomplished.

Wilberforce was also a British M.P. who had become an evangelical Christian and devoted himself to social reform in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. He was the chief spokesman for the abolitionist movement in the House of Commons. Wilberforce became concerned with the morality of the social elite and sought to reform them. Having been convinced that his political life could be used to serve God, he wrote a book calling on the upper classes to regain true Christian values in their lives.

Disraeli was a nineteenth century British Prime Minister who years earlier helped to form the Young England group. This group proposed an alliance between the aristocracy and the working class to combat the political power of the middle class. Disraeli had introduced both political and social reforms for the benefit of the working class. He acknowledged that nations are formed by the influences of nature and fortune. Political institutions emerge from the course of events, and are naturally created by the necessities

of nations.

Burke was an eighteenth century British statesman and philosopher who wrote extensively about the importance of constitutional statesmanship against prevailing abuse and misgovernment. His quintessential work was *Reflections On The Revolution In France* in which he implored European leaders to resist the demands of revolutionaries. Burke believed in a natural, organic state as opposed to an artificial one based on planning. The former would be flexible, adaptable and self-perpetuating while the latter would be rigid, repetitive, and tended to breakdown.

Macdonald was the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and Canada's first Prime Minister. He sought to broaden the appeal of his party in order to attain both immediate and long-term goals. These included the creation of Canada, the building of transcontinental railways, tariff protection for industry, and the settlement of western Canada.

These influences were apparent in a partial text of a speech that Roblin was to give to a Progressive Conservative Party convention in 1957:

...we can only proceed from the deep and abiding foundations of Conservative philosophy and Conservative thought. These, I believe, can be expressed in a single phrase, the religious basis of our society we call for free enterprise and individual responsibility. What do these words mean? I believe their ultimate meaning was expressed in a great story - New Testament - Talents. This story tells us that Providence gives to every human soul some talent. Providence calls on each one of us to give utmost to commit our powers and put our talent to its highest use - develop to its greatest extent...In this proud and rich and favoured

land – we can allow no one to fall below decent standards of life and living. The strong and prosperous must raise the weak, the sick, the needy necessitous. That is why the welfare of society is our concern. Why the Conservative can and does – use instrumentality of state – to set right the balance of justice and humanity.⁹³

Roblin is credited with spearheading reforms by building new schools, a Red River floodway to protect Winnipeg, and improving the welfare system.⁹⁴ In November 1962, Roblin had outlined what he called a program for Human Betterment which included aid to small businesses, interest-free loans to university students, increased operating grants for universities, and the expansion of welfare services, amongst other things.

Roblin's Anglicanism was not as ardent as Bedson's was. The premier's Anglicanism had been described as being in the English tradition. The term Anglican means "of England" and pertains to the Church of England whose followers were bound by shared tradition found in the Book of Common Prayer and belief in the Holy Bible and the Articles of Religion. Roblin gave an indication of his beliefs in the aforementioned speech, but not to the same extent as his clerk.

Bedson's religious faith was widely known, especially amongst those he worked for. During his tenure as Clerk, he was active in Anglican churches in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain, especially in issues

⁹³ Duff Roblin 'Partial Text of Speech', 1957

such as the ordination of women and Anglican-United Church union. Bedson was opposed to the ordination of women and had supported a “Memorandum to the Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada” which stated that:

‘...for the Anglican Church of Canada to act unilaterally, in the face of clear indications from other communions of doubt and disapproval, would not only increase the risk of widening schism but would seriously threaten the validity of our sacramental ministry. For many Anglicans, therefore, both in Canada and the U.S.A. the schimastical ordination of women is a point of no return. The moment it takes place the foundation for their continuing life in the Anglican communion is removed.’⁹⁵

Those who supported the memorandum reaffirmed their loyalty to the doctrine and discipline of the church “as indicated in the Solemn Declaration of 1893 and as generally set forth in Holy Scripture and the formularies of the Anglican Churches.”⁹⁶ Bedson believed that the ordination of women to the Priesthood went against the tradition of the Faith and Order of the Catholic Church, as it has been passed down for nineteen centuries, and received essentially unchanged in the Church of England.

In regards to Anglican-United Church union, he was also quite vocal in his opposition. In 1968, the General Commission on Church Union was formed to investigate the possibility of a union between both Churches and to propose recommendations for making such a union a success. Bedson’s

⁹⁴ John Saywell (ed.) *Canadian Annual Review* for 1961, p.60

⁹⁵ Derek Bedson ‘Memorandum’, November 9, 1976

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

opposition was not, however, shared by many. As a delegate to an Anglican General Synod meeting in Vancouver, he felt it necessary to speak out against the “Principles of Union” because it was, in his words, a “shotgun wedding.”⁹⁷ He was the only one of some four hundred delegates at the Synod to speak out against the idea.

Bedson’s opposition to Church union was twofold. Firstly, he believed that the two and a half months that the members of the Anglican Church were given to consider the “Principles of Union” before the Anglican General Synod was asked to pass judgement on them was too little. Secondly, he did not think that a fundamental examination of Christian belief was searched out in the discussions held by the committees of the Anglican and United Churches over a relatively short period of time. Bedson concluded that the document, the “Principles of Union”, was not drawn up with a view to what people actually thought to be true but rather with a view to what they thought the average member of both Churches would accept.

He supported the reinstatement of orthodox Anglican practices and sought the creation of explicitly Catholic Communities within the jurisdiction of the Anglican Church in which the Apostolic Faith and Order would be maintained without interference. Bedson had begun to take an interest in the

⁹⁷ Derek Bedson address on Church Union, undated

Anglican Orthodox Church established in the United States in 1963, which echoed his sentiments. Eventually, he broke with the Anglican Church and became one of the founders of St. Thomas-a-Becket Anglican Church, a Manitoba parish of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada, later to become part of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. Although Roblin did not elaborate upon his views of the monarchy, Bedson was of the opinion that, "From the Stuarts onward, the monarchy went downhill. The current ones are Hanoverians."⁹⁸

From a personal standpoint, there is no indication as to how both men came to know each other. They were, however, in correspondence with each other as early as 1955.⁹⁹ Their discussions were mostly focused on politics with Bedson offering Roblin advice. It was Bedson who strongly recommended that he employ Dalton Camp as his campaign strategist as far back as 1956. By 1958, Bedson continued to encourage Roblin to recruit him for his campaign stating that "He is not only skillful, but completely honest and honourable. Any authority given to him will be exercised as you would want it and not for the advantage of some private firm or group of partisans

⁹⁸ William Neville interview July 23, 1999

⁹⁹ letters in Derek Bedson papers listed as Personal Correspondence filed under Duff Roblin

(even Conservatives).”¹⁰⁰ Roblin replied: “I am in complete agreement with your comments of May 14th about Dalton. I expect him here Friday and will put him in charge. If anyone asks who he is - he is a personal friend of mine who has come to assist.”¹⁰¹ The need for secrecy was based on his belief that in Manitoba election campaigns it was not appropriate to bring in outsiders, meaning non-Manitobans. Roblin had Camp prepare the Conservatives’ press material. Roblin referred him to in later years as “our secret weapon.”¹⁰²

Having earned the newly - elected premier’s trust and respect, Bedson was chosen to become Clerk of the Executive Council. He was experienced in matters of protocol from his time at External Affairs and wanted to return to Manitoba. Roblin needed help in the transition from official opposition to governing, especially in the area of administration. There had not been a Clerk of the Executive Council since Robert Moffat held the post in 1952. Moffat’s role under Liberal premier Douglas Campbell had been that of fiscal adviser. Between 1952 and 1958, Deputy Attorney General O.M.M. Kay and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Charland Prud’homme, served as the clerk and clerk of the Executive Council respectively.

¹⁰⁰ Derek Bedson to Duff Roblin May 14, 1958

Upon his becoming premier, Roblin saw that cabinet government was loosely organized. The Campbell government had no minutes, no secretaries, and ministers took notes themselves on what to do. Roblin did three things. First, he hired Bedson to ensure proper documentation for the Executive Council (the Cabinet) and to ensure that a recommendation accompanied the papers, not just notes. In order to follow up on an issue, minutes of cabinet discussions were taken. Occasionally, senior civil servants would send documents without recommendation to the Clerk's office. Bedson would send those documents back to them without consideration until a recommendation accompanied them. This resulted in hostile feelings towards the Clerk. Roblin acknowledges this, but gives the impression that it was the result of deputy ministers having to adapt to these new practices.¹⁰³

According to Ted Byfield, Bedson added historical perspective due to his education. This allowed for mature decision-making as "Ministers are less inclined to the rash when they can see yesterday's problems in the light of the centuries."¹⁰⁴ Former cabinet minister and Conservative leader Sidney Spivak recalled that:

¹⁰² Roblin, p.80

¹⁰³ Duff Roblin interview November 21, 1998

¹⁰⁴ Ted Byfield 'He who made history now lives in Manitoba history' *Western Reporter*, May 29, 1989

Derek, on many occasions, would interrupt the cabinet meetings by referring to some past history dealing with politicians or legislation on matters then being discussed in Cabinet or would correct impressions statements relating to past history that were, in discussions, inaccurate. Not every comment by Derek was necessarily accepted; however, serious consideration had to be given to anything he said dealing with past events in Canada and Manitoba.¹⁰⁵

Spivak added that Bedson thoroughly understood the history of the Province of Manitoba and of Canada.¹⁰⁶

The premier also established two main subcommittees, the Treasury Board and the Manitoba Development Authority. Under Roblin, who also served as provincial treasurer, the main task of the Treasury Board was to relate departmental spending programs to the government's ability to spend. It would also estimate what money the government had. The Treasury Board had three ministers who were rotated annually to ensure that they had a good knowledge of government, collective responsibility, experience, and perspective.

Typical functions were to dig up figures and produce a report. If a department produced something that was working, the Treasurer would give this to them to do a benefit cost analysis or an analysis of outside sources of information. He visited ministers every so often, only wanting to determine policy effects on people. Roblin left the techniques to the Department or

¹⁰⁵ Sidney Spivak interview July 21, 1999

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Deputy Minister. According to political scientist Christopher Dunn, the real authority in the Provincial Treasury rested not with the Minister of Finance, but with the Deputy Provincial Treasurer, considered the major civil servant. The budgets set by the Treasury Board meant that departments had to live within them. There were exceptions once a year if there were special needs that went beyond a department's budgetary parameters.

The Manitoba Development Authority was responsible for economic and social policy. It looked at the refining of socio-economic problems. A staff of advisers was employed to make cost-benefit studies. It looked ahead to see what problems and costs would be. Roblin had to 'reinvent' things as, when he formed the government, only one member had been in cabinet before.¹⁰⁷ M.D.A. was designed to give innovative departments a chance to fly certain ideas to cabinet and to see these things in operation.

The cabinet operation employed by Roblin and Bedson allowed each minister to voice his opinion. The premier would then state what the consensus was, careful not to act if there was determined opposition. This was true in the case of the introduction of French as a language of instruction in the school system, and shared services. Both took about six months to decide. Each bill was examined clause by clause. Ministers were told if they

could get their draft bill through, their legislation would be given priority. Roblin thought this was an essential exercise in order to ensure proper respect for parliament.

Roblin also had a great deal of respect for the civil service, specifically its integrity. The civil service was a non-political organization but was an active partner in the business of government. Roblin saw no need to introduce partisanship into the senior level of administration within the civil service. In fact, from 1958 to 1967, he did not replace a single deputy minister thus retaining all those who worked for the Campbell administration. The idea of a politically - neutral civil service still appeals to Roblin to this day. In his memoirs, he wrote that: "it is unwise to encourage civil servants while in office to associate themselves with a political party. If they do so, they bring upon themselves the justified suspicion they are partisan."¹⁰⁸

There was a great deal of fanfare when Bedson was hired as Clerk of the Executive Council, a testament to his reputation within political circles. The common question asked by the media was how did Roblin lure the Prime Minister's private secretary back to Manitoba? Following the announcement of his hiring, a *Winnipeg Tribune* article described Bedson as follows:

¹⁰⁷ Duff Roblin interviewed December 13, 1983

¹⁰⁸ Roblin, p.93

As a former foreign service officer with the Department of External Affairs, Mr. Bedson had expert training on how to handle people, keep secrets and act as a shrewd adviser. His loyalty and his industry went far beyond the call of duty. He has been a man who has lived for his job and put everything he had into it at all hours. Mr. Bedson has an acute political sense and a tremendous loyalty to, and interest in Manitoba. He should prove an invaluable right bower to the new premier of Manitoba not only as clerk of the executive council but as a confidential adviser and assistant.¹⁰⁹

According to the *Tribune*, the Executive Council was Manitoba's governing body between legislative sessions. The premier was its minister and its clerk, Bedson, was its deputy minister. Theoretically, the orders-in-council it issued required approval from the legislature and the Lieutenant Governor while it had no such restrictions in between legislative sessions. The Clerk of the Executive Council is a non-political position similar to other deputy ministers and is considered a civil servant, but is potentially the most important in government.

Many could not figure out how Roblin had managed to obtain the services of someone like Derek Bedson. As a result, speculation ran rampant. Ted Byfield suggested that he had had a falling out with Diefenbaker.¹¹⁰ Diefenbaker, however, recalled that Bedson had agreed to continue on an *ad hoc* basis until after the 1957 Federal Election. He wrote that Bedson and

¹⁰⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 17, 1958

¹¹⁰ Ted Byfield, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 'Bedson leaves tour post' May 21, 1967

other Drew appointees “served me well and ably.”¹¹¹ Byfield stated that Bedson was perceived as a hatchet man by critics of Roblin’s government, that he had authority over everything from cabinet ministers to many aspects of provincial administration. Bedson was also accused of overseeing the Conservatives’ election campaign in 1958 as well as serving as their press agent.¹¹²

Roblin dismissed any notion of him acting as his hatchet man. He suggested that such speculation was probably the result of Bedson’s personality, which could be at times abrasive.¹¹³ Since there had been no clerk of the Executive Council in six years, senior civil servants were likely having difficulty adjusting to the new regime. His role in the election campaign was that of a confidant, as previously discussed.

Bedson’s reason for returning to Manitoba was simple, he was homesick. When he was hired by George Drew in 1955 and by Duff Roblin in 1958, he went to great lengths to ensure that press releases announcing his respective appointments included mention of his Manitoba roots. According to Bedson:

¹¹¹ John Diefenbaker *One Canada: memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker*, p.7

¹¹² Ted Byfield, *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 21, 1967

¹¹³ Duff Roblin interview, November 21, 1998

I see the Manitoban as the essential Canadian. There is something special about Manitoba - never mind the clichés about the melting pot or the Canadian mosaic - a particular freedom and respect for the individual that is responsible for the fact that a lot of Canadian problems are being worked out here.¹¹⁴

He saw his duties similar to those he performed as a member of the federal civil service. Bedson defined his duties as “following up cabinet duties as much as possible, easing the work of government, making sure its decisions are implemented.”¹¹⁵ The importance of the Clerk, however, is relative to the authority granted to him by the first minister of the council, the premier.

Bedson regarded Roblin as a good chairman and administrator. In his opinion, the premier had the ability to get the best out of his cabinet, to let the brighter lights shine through.¹¹⁶ Once a year, Roblin would hold a retreat with his Cabinet to establish the agenda for the upcoming year. Shortly after coming to power, Roblin alone met all the deputy ministers. All he asked for was for them to give “loyal and non-political support to the new management.”¹¹⁷

During his tenure as clerk, Bedson’s eccentricities achieved a near

¹¹⁴ Ted Allan ‘Derek Bedson’, *Winnipeg Tribune*, March 22, 1969

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Christopher Dunn *The Institutionalized Cabinet: Governing The Western Provinces* p. 119

¹¹⁷ Roblin, p.93

legendary status. Notable amongst them were the two immense oil paintings that hung in his office, one was Charles I, the other James I. His duties required him to sit in on cabinet meetings and his behaviour during them became memorable. Roblin recalls how Bedson, who would sit behind him in cabinet, would make rude noises. This usually occurred when he objected to something. Sometimes he would moan. Roblin said that he did his best to ignore him, but found it “very disconcerting.”¹¹⁸ Bedson attributed his moaning to his tutor on Saxon literature at Oxford. He recalls that:

He was an eccentric. You would go into his room to read your paper and you would see nobody. From down behind the couch, where he would be lying on the floor, a voice would say, ‘Read!’ You would then start. When you came to a bit where the argument was weak, these awful moans and wails would come from behind the couch. It made reading very difficult.¹¹⁹

In all the years they worked together, Roblin’s belief in Bedson’s political propriety and dedication to his profession never wavered. If anything, his belief would be reinforced with the decision by N.D.P. premier Ed Schreyer to retain his services. By 1967, Roblin had decided to contest the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative Party. The leadership race was ultimately won by Nova Scotia Premier Robert Stanfield, but marked the end of Duff Roblin’s reign as premier as he resigned from the leadership of

¹¹⁸ Duff Roblin interview, November 21, 1998

¹¹⁹ Ted Byfield, *Western Report*, May 1989

the provincial Conservatives.

Duff Roblin and Derek Bedson were acquainted with one another before the Conservatives came to power in Manitoba in 1958 and became close friends in the years that followed. There is no evidence to suggest that Bedson was the premier's "hatchet man", nor was he the provincial party's campaign strategist. He was well connected with influential people in Ottawa and would direct local politicians to them when they visited the nation's capital.¹²⁰ As the clerk, Bedson's role was administrative, not political. Although he was an intellectual conservative, his duties required him to be non-partisan, which he was. This would earn him the respect of many including Liberals and New Democrats.

¹²⁰ Sterling Lyon interview, June 22, 1999

Chapter 6: Walter Weir, Edward Schreyer, and Sterling Lyon

As the Roblin era came to a close in Manitoba, the Progressive Conservatives began a search for a new leader. They chose the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Minnedosa, Walter Weir, at the party's leadership convention in 1967. Although Weir served as premier for only two years, his tenure in office should be addressed with respect to Derek Bedson. His relationship with his clerk and how the government functioned under his watch will be examined. Weir's personal history will also be discussed in order to assess his compatibility with Bedson.

Walter Weir's roots were in small-town Manitoba. Born in High Bluff, he graduated from high school in Portage la Prairie where his father, who had worked for the United Grain Growers, had been transferred. Having settled in Minnedosa, Weir involved himself in local politics. He was a councillor, deputy mayor, and the town's planning commission chairman. In addition, he was the first chairman of the town's Chamber of Commerce. Weir also had worked as an undertaker.¹²¹

Weir entered provincial politics in 1959 when he was elected to the Manitoba legislature as the M.L.A. for Minnedosa. He would join Roblin's cabinet in 1961 as the Minister for Municipal Affairs at age 32, making him

the youngest cabinet minister in the Conservative government. A year later he became the Minister of Public Works. By 1965, the ministry was divided into the Department of Highways and the Department of Public Works. Weir was given control of both portfolios. The following year saw him let go of the public works portfolio, but retain highways, and add water control and conservation.

His steady rise in provincial politics culminated with his winning the leadership of the Progressive Conservatives in 1967. Although his tenure was only two years in duration, Weir's was far removed from the previous regime. Roblin's government was proactive, initiating reforms designed to modernize the province and addressing problems such as French-language rights.

His background was, of course, far different from that of his clerk of the Executive Council. Their differences also extended to their conservatism. Derek Bedson shared Roblin's small p – progressive conservatism to a great extent. Weir, however, did not espouse the reform-minded conservatism of the government he belonged to from 1959 to 1967. His was more restrained, and sought retrenchment, not advancement.

Political scientist Nelson Wiseman characterized the Weir government as a return to the “horse and buggy” style of government that Manitoba had

¹²¹ *Canadian Parliamentary Guide* (1969), p.551

not seen since the days of Douglas Campbell's Liberal administration.¹²²
Duff Roblin remembered that period as "a stately maintenance of things as they were, or at best a glacial response to changing times."¹²³

The only significant action that occurred during the Weir administration was its constitutional reform position. In a pamphlet entitled "What tomorrow, Canada?", the government favoured the retention of the monarchy and parliamentary system, equal provincial representation in the Senate, rejection of "special status" for Quebec, and a policy of "gradualism" on bilingualism. Franco-Manitobans were upset by the Conservatives' apparent indifference to their demands for linguistic equality. Weir was less sympathetic to the French language than Roblin, stating that "budgetary retrenchment" was much higher on his list of priorities than linguistic or cultural rights.¹²⁴

The Weir government also ran into difficulty dealing with issues such as Medicare and public housing. As premier, he fought the federal government over its Medicare plan calling it unconstitutional and threatening legal action to stop it. With public housing, the premier's rural roots became apparent. Weir was opposed to it on the basis of its unacceptability to

¹²²Neison Wiseman *Social Democracy in Manitoba*, p.126

Manitobans, particularly rural Manitobans. He stated that, "People in such areas are fiercely individualistic and they expect to pay their own way."¹²⁵ At a federal-provincial conference on housing, he added that "Manitobans didn't want or need public housing but would build their own homes as their forefathers had done."¹²⁶

From an administrative standpoint, there were similarities between Weir's cabinet framework and Roblin's, but there were also differences. He had either twelve or thirteen cabinet ministers. However, the duties of committees and staff had changed. Weir's government had replaced two of Roblin's administrative bodies. The Management Committee of Cabinet (M.C.C.) replaced the Treasury Board and the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet (P.P.C.C.) replaced the Manitoba Development Authority. The M.C.C. was given greater authority than the Treasury Board had under Roblin while the P.P.C.C. dealt with planning and global priority setting. The Roblin government in its commissioned Operation Productivity studies in 1967, however, originally conceived both committees.¹²⁷ The Executive Council Office was the beneficiary of these changes as the

¹²³ Duff Roblin, p.52

¹²⁴ Peterson '1969' in Saywell (ed.), p.125

¹²⁵ Doern, p.49

¹²⁶ Stinson, p.197

secretariats of the M.C.C. and the P.P.C.C. were located within it.

There is no doubt that given their respective backgrounds, Derek Bedson and Walter Weir had little in common. In the two years that Bedson was Weir's clerk, there was no evidence to indicate that they could not co-exist. Neither Duff Roblin nor Sterling Lyon recalled Bedson ever being unhappy serving as clerk under Walter Weir. The lack of personal correspondence between the latter two is evidence that their relationship was strictly professional. If Bedson ever felt enmity towards Weir, he did an excellent job of keeping those feelings to himself. As usual, Bedson said nothing as he had when he left his post with John Diefenbaker to come back to Manitoba. Bedson's feelings towards Weir were never made known.

In 1969, Weir decided to call an election only three years into the Conservatives' mandate. This early election resulted in victory for the provincial New Democratic Party led by Edward Schreyer and symbolized a changing of the guard in Manitoba politics as the largely Anglo-Protestant establishment was being replaced by people from many different ethnic and religious backgrounds.¹²⁸

Derek Bedson personified the old guard in Manitoba and began to

¹²⁷ Dunn, p. 113

¹²⁸ Robert Collison *Saturday Night*, May 1977, p.19

contemplate his future. The Schreyer era is very important when it comes to discussing Derek Bedson as the N.D.P. were well aware of his close connections with previous Conservative governments at the provincial and federal level. Why he was retained and how he co-existed with Edward Schreyer and the N.D.P. will now be examined. Their co-existence will be examined from both a personal and professional standpoint.

In the midst of Manitoba's first partisan transition of government since 1958, the federal Conservatives were already courting Derek Bedson. Their leader was Robert Stanfield, the former premier of Nova Scotia, who had defeated Duff Roblin for the party's leadership in 1967. Stanfield was reorganizing his office staff and, with the departure of his private secretary Lowell Murray, offered the post to Bedson.¹²⁹ Murray was well acquainted with him having first met Bedson when he was a member of the student Progressive Conservative club at St. Francis Xavier University. Bedson was working for George Drew at the time and had taken an interest in their activities. The two met again around the time Bedson was leaving Ottawa to work for Duff Roblin. Over the years, they kept in touch on rare occasions. When he left his post as private secretary, Murray and Stanfield tried to persuade him to return to Ottawa to be his replacement. Bedson, however,

had no desire to return to “the city of the grey sickness.”¹³⁰

Manitoba’s clerk of the Executive Council was mulling it over until the newly-elected premier Edward Schreyer had invited him to continue serving in that post for his minority government. Bedson agreed to stay on, a decision that Duff Roblin said reinforced his belief in his political propriety.¹³¹

Schreyer himself was hesitant to impose any designs on the civil service.

When asked if he had such intentions, he replied:

As a young M.L.A., I thought Manitoba had a good civil service; as an M.P. in Ottawa, through the corridor gossip, I heard more than once Manitoba has a good civil service. So I would hope there’s no need for any kind of designs. But to be frank, I must say that we hope to be able to bring in some new blood and some new ideas. We hope to do this in a way that will be compatible with the existing civil service and the administrative executive people.¹³²

While the Schreyer government carried out the centralization of government that began under Roblin, their election platform had placed policy results over administrative process. This explained why the N.D.P. essentially adopted the Conservatives’ administrative practice.¹³³ This would also include retaining Derek Bedson as Clerk of the Executive Council. Asked why he did, Schreyer replied:

I wanted some one well versed in the formal practices of Executive Council

¹²⁹ Lowell Murray interview October 27, 1999

¹³⁰ Robert Collison *Saturday Night*, May 1977, p.19

¹³¹ Roblin, p.92

¹³² Edward Schreyer *A Social Democrat In Power*, p.206

¹³³ *Ibid.*

work; one who could advise on cabinet function and role but who would not regard himself as a proper source of political strategy and drive. For this I wanted to rely on my elected colleagues in a collegial Cabinet. This is the essence of my reasons for retaining him. I had to trust his judgement...Retrospectively, I still do.¹³⁴

As Clerk of the Executive Council for Schreyer's government, Bedson's duties were virtually unchanged. Schreyer suggested he may have been a policy confidante for Roblin. Bedson's continued presence was seen as a metaphor for the overall setup of government administration. That is, Schreyer's government was repeating the administrative pattern established by Roblin.¹³⁵

The N.D.P. continued the "dualist" pattern established by the Conservatives until 1973. Essentially it meant the Management Committee of Cabinet and the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet which co-existed with their respective secretariats in the Executive Council Office. The P.P.C.C. was disbanded in 1973 and replaced by a committee of the entire Planning Committee of Cabinet. Cabinet itself had grown from thirteen members in 1969 to seventeen by 1977.¹³⁶

The Schreyer government also revived Conservative legislation regarding financial administration. The Financial Administration Act and the

¹³⁴ Edward Schreyer interview August, 1999

¹³⁵ Dunn, p. 134

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

Provincial Auditor's Act were initially proposed by the Conservatives and, with minor differences, were adopted by the N.D.P. The former was designed to replace the Treasury Department Act and, in doing so, omitted reference to the treasurer and the Treasury Board. As a result of this change, financial decisions were made by the M.C.C. and the Department of the Provincial Treasurer became the Department of Finance.

The Executive Council Office (E.C.O.) initially comprised the Premier's Office, the Planning Secretariat of Cabinet, and the Management Secretariat. By 1977, the Premier's Office included Bedson and Schreyer's executive assistants while both secretariats combined employed well over 120 people. As Clerk, Bedson's duties included attending morning cabinet sessions. The executive assistants were responsible for political matters. The Planning Secretariat was the agency that controlled all planning, whether sectoral or comprehensive. It essentially recruited people to develop plans and assigned them to various departments to enact their plans. Hence, planning officials had a short duration in the Schreyer government.

When the N.D.P. were first elected in 1969, Schreyer was asked what changes in government organization and structure would take place. He was unsure what changes would be made although he stated that he wanted "good

regional representation in cabinet.”¹³⁷ As premier, he wanted to improve upon communications with the public as well as the legislature. With regard to his predecessor, he stated, “he was a doer, rather than a talker. I would hope the premier could do both.”¹³⁸ Like Roblin, Schreyer stated his support for Manitoba’s civil service. Unlike him, however, he expressed the desire to recruit people from outside the civil service in order to invigorate it. This involved the hiring of people with connections to the N.D.P. Derek Bedson’s role was simply to supervise the normal business of government while the aforementioned organizations were responsible for planning and priorities.

With their professional relationship well established, it is important to establish their personal compatibility. After Bedson decided to stay on as clerk, his friend Professor William Neville, then a political scientist at Trent University, wrote to him saying, “there is of course a certain naturalness about a red Tory serving an N.D.P. government.”¹³⁹ Schreyer’s reason was based on a principle of respecting the continuity of government. Cynics believed that Bedson, adept in protocol, was retained to show the new cabinet

¹³⁷ Schreyer, p.207

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ William Neville to Derek Bedson July 23, 1969

ministers how to hold their forks properly.¹⁴⁰

In the eight years that Bedson served the N.D.P. government, his relationship with the premier almost never extended beyond their professional duties. He did, however, have more in common with Schreyer than his predecessor. Ed Schreyer was, like Walter Weir, born and raised in rural Manitoba. His parents were of Austro-German descent and he had a degree of linguistic proficiency in both German and Ukrainian. He would later learn French, thus encapsulating the “Manitoba mosaic” in his linguistic ability.

By 1958, he had earned Bachelor’s degrees in Arts and Education, and a Master’s degree in Arts. He also taught Political Science and International Relations at the University of Manitoba. At the age of 22, Schreyer was elected to the Manitoba legislature as a member of the Commonwealth Co-operative Federation or C.C.F. and became the legislature’s youngest member. By 1965, he was elected as an N.D.P. Member of Parliament for the riding of Springfield. Three years later, he was elected in the federal riding of Selkirk. In 1969, he contested the leadership of Manitoba’s N.D.P. and won it only months before the provincial election that would see him and his party emerge victorious.

While Bedson did not have a personal relationship with the premier, he

¹⁴⁰ Robert Collison *Saturday Night*, May 1977, p.19

was rumoured to be closer to some of Schreyer's cabinet ministers such as Joe Borowski, Sidney Green, and Laurent Desjardins. Borowski was described as a "professional roughneck" who began his political career by camping out on the steps of the provincial legislature.¹⁴¹ Duff Roblin recalled that he was protesting salary increases for provincial cabinet ministers. When Borowski became a cabinet minister himself, Roblin states that "his views of cabinet minister's salaries had remarkably softened."¹⁴² There was nothing in Bedson's papers, however, that indicates why they were close. Correspondence was limited to mere greeting cards and invitations, yet it was said that Bedson would often visit Borowski at his farm.¹⁴³ Borowski himself was a Roman Catholic and a vocal anti-abortion activist. Two years after he was elected to the provincial legislature as a New Democratic, he resigned his cabinet post as Minister of Highways to protest the government's funding of abortion.

Sidney Green, however, denies that he knew the clerk on a personal level. He claims to have known him only through his dealings with him in his

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Roblin, p.216

¹⁴³ Robert Collison *Saturday Night* (May 1977), p.20

job “related to other Governments and Provinces.”¹⁴⁴ Laurent Desjardins, a former N.D.P. cabinet minister, met Derek Bedson when he was first elected to the legislature as a Liberal in 1959. He remembers him as being very helpful and knowledgeable. From his perspective, Bedson had a good working relationship with all the premiers he served.¹⁴⁵

On the role of the Clerk of the Executive Council, he explains it as involving attendance at Cabinet meetings listening to discussions. The Clerk, in his opinion, had to be very close to the Premier and is often chosen not only for his or her understanding of the political process, but also for his or her support of the party in power.¹⁴⁶ As Clerk, Bedson was responsible to the speaker during legislative sessions. Desjardins stated that it is not uncommon for a Premier to replace his Clerk of the Executive Council after a change in government.¹⁴⁷ Ultimately, the decision rests with the Premier. Not everyone, however, had the same feelings towards him that Desjardins did. Russell Doern, a colleague of Desjardins, wrote a book about the Schreyer governments two terms in office, which included some choice words about Bedson. Doern called him the “resident ogre” and suggested this Anglophile

¹⁴⁴ Sidney Green interview October 12, 1999

¹⁴⁵ Laurent Desjardins interview July 15, 1999

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

in the clerk's office was more British than the British.¹⁴⁸ He claimed that Bedson spent most of his time reading newspapers and writing letters to friends in Spain. During the morning cabinet sessions, Doern remembers that the clerk would spend his time reading and, on occasion, sleeping. This would force Schreyer to repeat his summation for his benefit. He did, however, acknowledge Bedson's skill in protocol and described his duties as "checking things out with contacts in Ottawa and providing the proper terms of address for correspondence and conversation."¹⁴⁹ Doern says it amounted to a \$40,000 a year position requiring little work.

In the Schreyer era, the duties of the Clerk of the Executive Council were limited to protocol and administrative work. The increased centralization of decision making that came under the domain of the Executive Council gave the premier greater supervision over the development of policy. Schreyer has continued to state that Bedson's loyalty was beyond reproach. The events that would transpire shortly before the formal transition from the N.D.P. to the Progressive Conservatives in 1977 would change that opinion amongst N.D.P.ers.

The 1977 Provincial Election saw the Schreyer era come to an end as

¹⁴⁸ Doern, p.106

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

the Progressive Conservatives, led by Sterling Lyon, returned to power after an eight year absence. It was during his term in office that the events and factors occurred that would eventually lead to Derek Bedson's downfall as Clerk of the Executive Council. The major events and factors were the dismissal of three N.D.P.-appointed deputy ministers, the administrative organization of the Lyon government, and the premier's relationship with his clerk.

Having won a majority government on election night October 11th, Lyon's new regime set about making changes only days before its official swearing-in ceremony on October 24th. On Saturday October 22nd, Sterling Lyon met with three N.D.P. deputy ministers along with Derek Bedson. The three were Lionel Orlikow (education), Willem "Bill" Janssen (agriculture), and Marv Nordman (public works). They each met individually with the premier-elect and his clerk and were told of their dismissal.

During the election campaign, Lyon had made no secret of the fact that he intended to reduce the size of the civil service and to remove those who were either not politically compatible or thought to be incapable. This included the deputy minister of public works, who had been reprimanded by Justice Robert Trudel during a commission of inquiry into a fatal fire at the Portage Home for Retardates. Nordman had been cited for uttering profanities

and racial slurs.¹⁵⁰ Following the release of the commission's report, Lyon publicly stated that Nordman would be dismissed.¹⁵¹

Lionel Orlikow had intended to resign anyway. He stated that, "I was plank number five in the Conservative's election platform."¹⁵² Orlikow was a partisan N.D.P.er. As Schreyer cabinet minister Laurent Desjardins noted, "a very capable and efficient Deputy Minister, but a person with strong beliefs who wished to promote his views. Of course it could never work when he had to serve as a Deputy Minister when his party did not hold office."¹⁵³

Bill Janssen had also intended to resign. Rural Conservative M.L.A.'s bestowed upon him the nickname "Red Willie" when he had proposed a program to lease Crown-owned land to novice farmers. The deputy minister of agriculture did not wish to continue in that post with Lyon's Conservatives, "But I was going to do it the civilized way, hand my letter of resignation to the new minister and allow him to choose the date."¹⁵⁴

Russ Doern recounted the events of that Saturday in October 1977 in his book *Wednesdays Are Cabinet Days*. According to him, Marv Nordman viewed Bedson's presence as that of an assistant executioner, claiming that,

¹⁵⁰ *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 13, 1977

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 25, 1977

with the Conservatives in power, he was “back in the saddle.” Bedson reportedly said, “I never left.”¹⁵⁵ Doern tried to paint a picture of three dedicated deputy ministers who were unjustly dismissed by the new government. Sterling Lyon, however, saw things differently.

The premier-elect had campaigned on downsizing the provincial bureaucracy and had publicly targeted at least one of the three for dismissal in the midst of the election. Lyon acknowledged that Orlikow and Janssen’s dismissals were politically motivated while Nordman’s was a question of competence.¹⁵⁶ Orlikow’s talent as a teacher was unquestioned, but his abilities as an administrator were.

The reactions from the three varied as both Janssen and Orlikow were quite vocal about their fate, while little was heard from Nordman. As for the Clerk of the Executive Council, Orlikow was the only one of the three whom did not cite him as a reason for their dismissal. Janssen, however, was more explicit than Nordman when it came to discussing Bedson. He believed that the clerk liked to see himself as an apolitical civil servant. Janssen did admit that during the Roblin-Weir period when the N.D.P. were in opposition,

¹⁵³ Laurent Desjardins interview July 15, 1999

¹⁵⁴ *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 5, 1977

¹⁵⁵ Doern, p. 106

¹⁵⁶ Sterling Lyon interview, June 22, 1999

Bedson was never the subject of controversy and was acknowledged as a master of protocol.¹⁵⁷

When the N.D.P. formed the government in 1969, several members were distrustful of some higher civil servants although no one was dismissed at the outset. There may have been the odd cabinet minister who harboured a suspicion that Bedson might give information to the Tories, but over time that suspicion waned, if not disappeared altogether. Bedson did not take part in policy discussions and was not consulted on matters of policy. Everyone knew that he had an old Tory background, but he was accepted as non-partisan.

All of that changed after the 1977 election when Derek Bedson sat beside Sterling Lyon when he fired three deputy ministers two days before he was even sworn in. Janssen believed that as a master of protocol Bedson knew that Lyon should at least have waited until after he had been sworn in. As well, Bedson's presence at the firing put him firmly in the P.C. camp.¹⁵⁸

Bedson, however, was never a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, provincial or federal. He was an intellectual conservative,

¹⁵⁷ Willem Janssen interview January 6, 2000

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

not a partisan one.¹⁵⁹ Until Schreyer's time, civil servants were not allowed to participate in politics. When Lyon joined the Attorney General's department in 1949, he had to give up his party membership until he left in 1957. Bedson never stated his opinion on the Schreyer government, but occasionally rolled his eyes when it was a topic of conversation.¹⁶⁰ Lyon believed that in retrospect, his Clerk should have dismissed the three deputy ministers. He himself intervened in order to ensure their departure. According to him, Bedson was the one who summoned them.

Once this task was completed, Lyon turned his attention to re-organizing the provincial government. He formed a task force consisting of middle management public officials and representatives of business and industry. The "Task Force on Government Organization and Economy" was co-chaired by Conrad Riley, a senior executive officer with the Great West Life Assurance Company, and by Sidney Spivak, Lyon's predecessor as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba. The Task Force was asked to re-evaluate the role and structure of the provincial government and issued its report in April 1978. The "Report on Government Organization and Economy" concentrated on two objectives: central and departmental

¹⁵⁹ Sterling Lyon interview, June 22, 1999

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

reorganization of the civil service.¹⁶¹

This reorganization involved the elimination of most of the Schreyer-era cabinet committees and the central agencies for planning and management. All that was left were two statutory committees. There was one dominant central department, that of Finance, and basic central staff assistance within the Executive Council Office. The Task Force also recommended that fiscal and expenditure planning should be joined together. A Treasury Board support group, the Financial Analysis Branch, was established in the Finance Department as opposed to the E.C.O. as in Schreyer's day. The F.A.B. had a small staff in comparison to the M.C.C. Just as it was in the Roblin years, the deputy minister of finance was secretary to the Board.

According to political scientist Christopher Dunn, this small alteration clearly indicated Lyon's wish to re-establish the traditional cabinet. It demonstrated, according to one Finance official, "a more important role for Finance and an emphasis on more responsibility and autonomy for departments. There was more leeway for ministers to manage and less second-guessing by central bureaucrats."¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Dunn, p.165

¹⁶² Op. Cit., p.173

With a significant reduction in its mandate and size, the Executive Council saw a partial return to an unaided role. The Management Committee Secretariat ceased to exist as a part of the Executive Council Office (E.C.O.). In December of 1977, the Planning Secretariat was dismantled and the permanent staff was relocated from the E.C.O. to the various departments. During the Lyon era, E.C.O. staff would function similar to the Prime Minister's Office staff. They handled correspondence, appointments, and Party relations.

Derek Bedson's role had grown with the return of the Conservatives to office. The clerk's position in the Schreyer years had mostly entailed protocol, staff recruitment, and taking cabinet minutes. Under Lyon, Bedson was also a mediator between various bureaucratic factions. In theory, but not in practice, the special assistant to the premier was answerable to the Clerk of the Executive Council. Lyon's special assistant was Bill McCance, a chartered financial analyst. He had served as secretary of the Task Force on Government Organization and Economy and as a special assistant to the chairman of the Treasury Board. McCance was the chief of political staff in the Executive Council Office and, occasionally, had a policy advisory role. His duties involved both the selection and the direction of ministerial aides, organizing the premier's tours, campaign co-ordination, and acting as a

“political policeman” to curb wayward politicians and political staff.¹⁶³

Lyon’s relationship with his clerk went back to when he was a minister in Duff Roblin’s government in 1958. He recalls that Roblin approached Bedson to serve as his clerk rather than the other way around as Roblin had stated.¹⁶⁴ As Clerk, he regularized the business of council. Cabinet operated from the agenda set out in orders-in-council. The premier was chair of the Executive Council. When cabinet would address political items not on the agenda, Bedson would leave the room. He made notes, brought order and consistency to the business of cabinet.

When asked his occupation, Bedson replied “I’m a historian.” Lyon said that he had a photographic memory, and claims he knew the names of every member of the British House of Lords.¹⁶⁵ Bedson also knew almost every significant person in Ottawa and was well liked in the nation’s capital. He had known former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau when they worked in the federal civil service. It was at a reception at the Rideau Club in 1965 that Bedson introduced Lyon to Trudeau.

Bedson was very abrupt with executive council staff, as he did not

¹⁶³ Op.Cit.,p.175

¹⁶⁴ Sterling Lyon interview, June 22, 1999

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

suffer fools gladly even if they were not.¹⁶⁶ On rare occasions, he was abrupt with ministers. Bedson, in Lyon's opinion, had a perfect sense of policy, but not of politics. On rare occasions, he would question whether something would work better politically. In such cases, he was told to mind his own business.

As for the premier himself, Lyon had been employed in the Attorney General's department from 1949 to 1957. Between 1953 and 1957, he had worked as a Crown attorney, a public service position. In 1958, Duff Roblin recruited him to run in the Fort Garry constituency in the provincial election. Lyon had a demanding nature and expected a lot from those he worked with. As premier, he, like Roblin, had a small group of trusted advisers. It was said that because of a lifetime of experience, he "would go against all advice to follow his own instincts and intuition."¹⁶⁷ As premier, Lyon brought a harder edge to Manitoba politics. As one reporter put it, "in the Roblin government, it was his Attorney General Sterling Lyon who did the gutter fighting and spoke the strong words. When Lyon returned as premier, he had to be his own street fighter."¹⁶⁸

Duff Roblin saw his former Attorney General as a born politician

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Dunn, pp.164-5

because of his “quick wit, clever tongue, and restrained pugnacity.”¹⁶⁹

Lyon, in Roblin’s opinion, was able to keep the legislative process moving and, therefore, get business done. As Attorney General, he ran his post with discretion and with a strong knowledge of legal and political principles. Roblin rejected the reputation Lyon earned as a hard-line right-winger, as Roblin recalled that Lyon had supported many of his government’s progressive measures.

Roblin’s opinion of Lyon was reinforced by a number of unnamed sources cited by *Winnipeg Free Press* reporter Ted Allan. One source referred to as a “friend” stated that “he was the ideal cabinet minister. He wasn’t afraid of delegating authority. He would first test the proficiency of his department people and then their head if they measured up. It engendered tremendous loyalty and efficiency.” An “enemy” stated that “Lyon’s supremely political and completely merciless. He does nothing without considering its political implications. He’s extremely clever and articulate and he has no compunction about snowing just about anyone.” An “impartial observer” added, “he used to be impatient with lesser people. He doesn’t suffer fools gladly because he’s essentially a courtroom person and he likes to

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Roblin, p.102

proceed in an orderly way. The untidiness of ordinary performance irks him.”¹⁷⁰

Lyon initially defined himself as a “progressive Progressive Conservative, not quite a Prairie radical.” As leader of the Progressive Conservatives, he stated “I’m a traditionalist, a small ‘c’ conservative and a monarchist. I’m not a utopian, which is also why I’m not a socialist. And, I’m not an egalitarian, because I think it’s fundamentally contrary to human nature.”¹⁷¹

Roblin’s opinion of Lyon was reinforced even further by the latter’s policy on linguistic rights. As Lyon’s Clerk, Bedson had printed up a memorandum for his files regarding Francophone education in Manitoba. This memorandum dealt with a resolution of administrative difficulties in the Department of Education. On October 19, 1978, Bedson discussed with Lyon a problem raised by the Societe Franco-Manitobaine and the Manitoba Teacher’s Society. The memorandum revealed that the Conservatives sought to improve and extend the teaching of French, including French immersion programs. The problem they discussed was “the implementation through the school divisions of the teaching now available through the existing facilities.”

¹⁷⁰ Ted Allan ‘Sterling Lyon’ *Winnipeg Free Press* March 3, 1976

¹⁷¹ Ibid

Lyon apparently had confirmed that his policy was to stress the importance of teaching French to the young rather than to civil servants.¹⁷² Over a year later, the Supreme Court of Canada had made a decision on linguistic rights by restoring Section 23 of the Manitoba Act. This clause made Manitoba a province in which both English and French were given equal recognition in the legal system. The provincial legislature subsequently passed an interpretive bill to give legal weight to French versions of statutes.

Lyon's attempt to de-politicize and streamline the civil service as well as his conduct during Question Period led to a hostile environment within the legislature. The N.D.P. reaction to the changes to the civil service was highly critical, especially of the way they were handled. In the days that followed Lyon's inauguration as Premier, the newspapers were filled with stories about dismissals or impending dismissals. The Premier's conduct in Question Period also raised the ire of the N.D.P. caucus. Lyon had made comments regarding the ideological bent of New Democratic M.L.A. Saul Cherniack. Responding to criticism by Cherniack during one debate, Lyon said: "if he thinks he's here representing Karl Marx, that's fine. The rest of us are here representing the people of Manitoba." When Cherniack demanded an apology, Lyon replied: "I happily withdraw any reference to Karl Marx; he

¹⁷² 'Memorandum' October 26, 1978

doesn't just represent Karl Marx in this house, he has a number of colleagues who also represent him.”¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Catherine Bainbridge ‘Lyon’s colourful career filled with controversy’ *Winnipeg Free*

Chapter 7: Bedson's dismissal

After only one term in office, Sterling Lyon's Progressive Conservative government was defeated in the 1981 Provincial Election by the N.D.P. led by Howard Pawley. Among the first actions of the new government was the dismissal or "reassignment" of Derek Bedson as Clerk of the Executive Council. The transition committee that included former Finance minister Saul Cherniack, the late Saul Miller, and the deputy minister of health Michael Decter reached the decision. Howard Pawley made the final decision himself.

Shortly after Bedson had been dismissed, the Pawley government dismissed twenty-three Conservative executive assistants although these were expected, as they were political to begin with. Bedson's, however, was not. The newly - elected premier was accused of rewarding his political friends at the expense of the continuity and expertise of non-partisan civil servants. Pawley's actions were said to have paved the way for the end of the non-partisan civil service and the beginning of inferior methods of public administration.¹⁷⁴

Pawley stated publicly that since the clerk sits in on cabinet, his

Press. December 20, 1986

government wanted someone in the job not “closely associated” with the previous regime. Bedson understood that his job is deputy minister to the premier and that a new premier may want someone else. “Each new government has to make a decision about the person who occupies this job”, he stated.¹⁷⁵ In his place, the N.D.P. appointed two men: William Regehr, N.D.P. party president, and Michael Decter, the deputy minister of Health under Schreyer and Lyon. Regehr was named principal secretary and chief-of-staff in Pawley’s office while Decter was appointed Clerk of the Executive Council.

Pawley remembers Bedson as a rather stern no nonsense individual. He did not question his ability to perform efficiently in his assigned position and also found him to be a likable individual who was generally accessible. There were occasions, however, when Pawley would hear criticism that he was overly protective in his role as gatekeeper to the Premier, which he would expect. Some of the complaints were more legitimate. One incident Pawley recalls involved a discussion he had with the local Japanese consul who had difficulty arranging a parlay with Premier Schreyer, blaming Bedson for this

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Peter Cowan *Ottawa Citizen*, December 3, 1981

difficulty.¹⁷⁶

Pawley also remembers other more serious concerns relating to his position within the government. Due to his long association with the Progressive Conservative Party, New Democrats considered him an outsider. This was reflected in the occasional anxiety experienced around the cabinet table whenever matters of an obviously highly sensitive and political nature required debate. Sometimes it resulted in discussions that would have otherwise taken place around the cabinet table taking place in a more unconventional setting elsewhere. Pawley claimed in 1999 that Bedson never betrayed their trust, yet there was nonetheless persistent uneasiness about how far his confidence could be depended upon.¹⁷⁷

As far as he was concerned, Bedson's reputation was soiled with the defeat of the Schreyer government. It was held by many that he had played a pivotal part in the hasty firing of the three deputy ministers who had served in the Schreyer government. Despite his presence at their dismissal, Pawley does not believe that he played any significant role in what was clearly a premature action by Sterling Lyon.¹⁷⁸

He remembers an incident of a personal nature that helps to explain the

¹⁷⁶ Howard Pawley interview July 22, 1999

prevailing tension dominating the period. On his last day as Attorney General at the legislature, Pawley met Bedson who lamented in a “savvy sober and straight-faced” way “how sorry he was to see me leave.” Pawley replied, “don’t worry, we will be back.”¹⁷⁹

Bedson’s dismissal raised concerns throughout the civil service, as there had been when the Conservatives returned to power in 1977. One civil servant remarked, “It makes me wonder if there is going to be more of the same; maybe bloodletting in the American tradition each time there is a change of administration will become the rule rather than the exception.”¹⁸⁰

Derek Bedson was recognized as the sort of public servant who would be the first to argue persuasively the importance of assuring loyalty between politicians and the bureaucracy. He would also be the first to pledge that allegiance and had done so. He had served his country and his province with loyalty and distinction over three decades.¹⁸¹

As chairman for the transitional committee for the N.D.P., Saul Cherniack made the announcement concerning Derek Bedson. Cherniack said that Bedson “will not continue to sit in on cabinet meetings” and that this was

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Peter Cowan *Ottawa Citizen*, December 3, 1981

a “mutual decision” reached by the two of them. He went on to say that there would be a relative calm for most civil servants. “There is no bloodletting in this. It’s very different than it was in 1977.”¹⁸² Sterling Lyon, however, does not consider the dismissals in 1977 a “bloodletting.” He points out that only three deputy ministers were dismissed while others, including those appointed by the Schreyer government, stayed on.¹⁸³ However, many other dismissals during the Lyon administration had occurred in the years following 1977.

Amongst his friends and colleagues, there were a variety of opinions as to the nature of Bedson’s dismissal and his reaction to it. Duff Roblin stated that he knew nothing about the controversy surrounding the dismissal of the three N.D.P.-appointed Deputy Ministers in 1977. He added that he had no reaction to Bedson’s dismissal in 1981 and believed he understood that it was every government’s prerogative to choose the people they feel are most suitable.¹⁸⁴ Sidney Spivak, the former leader of Manitoba’s Progressive Conservative Party, did not know what Bedson’s reaction was. He did, however, state that he had proven himself to be non-partisan during different

¹⁸¹ *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 27, 1981

¹⁸² *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 26, 1981

¹⁸³ Sterling Lyon interview June 22, 1999

¹⁸⁴ Duff Roblin interview November 21, 1998

administrations.¹⁸⁵ Sterling Lyon was shocked when he heard about it, but was not around long enough to gauge his Clerk's reaction. Edward Schreyer, as stated previously, believed that Bedson's loyalty was beyond reproach. He added that it was within the government's right to make this decision.¹⁸⁶

Lee Southern, who had served as the Executive Assistant to Sidney Spivak, believed that the N.D.P. government decided it wanted someone of their own political philosophy as Clerk of the Executive Council and simply arranged for that by first removing Bedson.¹⁸⁷ Bill Neville recalled his misgivings about Bedson's presence at the dismissal of the three deputy ministers. He claimed that Bedson was pleased with the transition in government in 1977. Neville himself had been asked to assist in the transition by the Lyon government. According to him, Bedson had allowed himself to be drawn into the change in government. Neville was somewhat critical of the Lyon administration, but Bedson was a staunch defender of it. Neville recalls having lunch with Bedson and how he exploded with rage when the subject of the Lyon government was brought up. As a result, both men were not on speaking terms for several years. Neville was sad to hear of Bedson's dismissal, but he could see it coming. He wasn't sure that the Clerk of the

¹⁸⁵ Sidney Spivak interview July 21, 1999

Executive Council had to be present at the dismissal of Orlikow, Janssen, and Nordman. As he saw it, political decisions were within Lyon's prerogative.¹⁸⁸

It was not surprising given the enmity of the N.D.P. towards Bedson after the events that transpired four years earlier, but the reaction was unanimous. Both local newspapers, the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Winnipeg Sun*, published editorials criticizing the N.D.P. for their actions. Even the *Globe & Mail* and the *Ottawa Citizen* picked up on the story.

In a *Winnipeg Free Press* editorial, Bedson was lauded for his years in the civil service:

Mr. Bedson is the sort of public servant who would be the first to argue persuasively the importance of assuring loyalty between politicians and the bureaucracy. He would be the first to pledge that allegiance – and did. Premier Schreyer recognized Derek Bedson's value as an intelligent and experienced official, uniquely able to guide an inexperienced government through the growing pains, which accompany the initial assumption of power. The N.D.P. asked Mr. Bedson to remain after the election of 1969 and found no subsequent reason to withdraw the invitation. Mr. Bedson became an officer of the Order of Canada in 1978 – an honour reserved for only the most deserving of Canadians. He has served his country and his province with loyalty and distinction for over three decades.¹⁸⁹

The *Winnipeg Sun* published an editorial on what impact Bedson's dismissal would have on the civil service:

Amongst the most valuable inheritances of the British tradition is the tradition of a professional and non-partisan civil service. It is the principle

¹⁸⁶ Edward Schreyer interview August 16, 1999

¹⁸⁷ Lee Southern interview July 26, 1999

¹⁸⁸ William Neville interview July 23, 1999

¹⁸⁹ *Winnipeg Free Press* November 27, 1981

that governments should be served by those who have years of experience in public service and are capable of offering advice and loyalty to the government of the day – regardless of political stripe. Recent appointments of deputy ministers and other senior officials, however, have been motivated principally by partisanship, rather than competence, and cast a dark shadow over the entire bureaucracy. What Mr. Pawley has done, contrary to his statements on the subject, is reward political friends at the expense of non-partisan career civil servants.¹⁹⁰

Richard Cleroux, a reporter for the *Globe & Mail*, wrote that Bedson was “one of the most accessible and affable of civil servants.” He added that “He loves protocol and would spend endless hours making sure every detail was in place.”¹⁹¹ Peter Cowan from the *Ottawa Citizen* wrote that his dismissal was in part the result of “the sharp political dichotomy between the two major parties, the Lyon Tory’s neo-conservatism versus the N.D.P.’s left-of-centre social democracy.”¹⁹² Bedson’s role in the 1977 dismissal of the three deputy ministers is acknowledged as a contributing factor, but he had been asked to be present at the firings by Lyon. Bedson had agreed to his request in the belief that a third party presence was necessary. This was not, however, how the N.D.P. saw it.

In a letter to the editor of the *Globe & Mail*, George Grant stated that Bedson’s dismissal raised a general issue about Canadian history. Since the turn of the century, he states that there had been a conscious decision to

¹⁹⁰ *Winnipeg Sun* November 27, 1981

¹⁹¹ ‘Pawley axes Derek Bedson, Manitoba’s top civil servant.’ *The Globe & Mail*, November 26, 1981

¹⁹² ‘Mandarins fear new regime will purge ranks.’ *Ottawa Citizen*, December 3, 1981

follow the British tradition in building an elite civil service that was non-partisan. As he saw it:

This principle is always under attack because of the exigencies of political patronage, and the Premier of Manitoba has, therefore, taken a retrograde step in the dismissal of Mr. Bedson. In the long run great harm will become apparent in the establishment of ideological civil services. Ideologies have a way of quickly changing in a technological society. The undermining of this tradition may seem palatable to the N.D.P. but it does not serve this country well.¹⁹³

Pawley's background was quite different from that of Bedson, but was similar in some ways to his predecessors. Like Weir and Schreyer, he came from a small town background, in Ontario. Like Lyon, he also went to Law School. Pawley's family were active supporters of the Commonwealth Co-operative Federation (C.C.F.), the N.D.P.'s predecessor. He himself was first elected to the Manitoba legislature in 1969 representing the riding of Selkirk. He also held two portfolios in the Schreyer government. The first was Municipal Affairs, which he held from 1969 to 1976. The second was Attorney General, which he held from 1973 to 1977. As Premier, Pawley increased the number of cabinet committees significantly. This led to their adoption of secretariat services from relevant departments, not the Executive Council Office. The Clerk's duties were similar to those of Bedson's in that he processed orders in council and coordinated the cabinet and the bureaucracy with the Premier. There was, however, a conscious effort to keep

staff levels low in the E.C.O. to prevent central bureaucrats having increased authority.¹⁹⁴

Derek Bedson's career as Manitoba's Clerk of the Executive Council had come to an unceremonious end. Other than Pawley's statement that he wanted someone not closely associated with the previous regime, there appears to have been no particular reason for his dismissal. While the new government tried to portray his dismissal as a routine matter, reference was made to the transition of 1977 when civil servants appeared under threat from the Lyon administration. Clearly, Bedson's presence at the dismissal of three N.D.P.-appointed Deputy Ministers was not far from the thoughts of the N.D.P.'s transition committee.

¹⁹³ George Grant to the Editor (*Globe & Mail*) November 30, 1981

¹⁹⁴ Christopher Dunn, p.184

Conclusion

Derek Bedson's career as the Clerk of the Executive Council ended due to personal feelings rather than because of policy or partisan disagreements. Despite statements to the contrary, the N.D.P. government believed that he was no longer capable of remaining non-partisan. There was no evidence to suggest that he had overtly or covertly breached the confidentiality of any of the governments he served. He had gone from civil servant to political adviser to civil servant and political adviser. Months later, however, he was suddenly in demand.

In April of 1982, Bedson was hired by the Conservative government in Ontario to serve as a Counsellor in their Consulate in Brussels. At that moment, the newly-elected Conservative government in Saskatchewan began pursuing him to serve as their Clerk of the Executive Council. In a letter to Saskatchewan Conservative Member of Parliament Ray Hnatyshyn, Bedson wrote that:

The whole thing happened within the space of about three days, i.e.. I was preparing myself for the big departure from Toronto to take up an attractive posting with the Ontario delegation in Brussels when I had the offer of a senior post under the new Saskatchewan administration. Given the almost complete governmental inexperience of the newly elected Members, and my own rather long knowledge of the sort of things they were likely to require, I did not see

how I could refuse that offer.¹⁹⁵

In the government's announcement of his hiring, Premier Grant Devine stated that: "He brings a wealth of experience, professionalism, and dedication, which will be appreciated in our already strong public service."¹⁹⁶

In addition to his administrative duties, Bedson served on a committee exploring the establishment of Saskatchewan trade offices abroad. The Committee on Trade and Investments Abroad recommended that the government should establish a desk in Canadian consular and trade offices on an experimental basis. In 1983, the province's Agricultural Development Corporation (Agdevco) opened an office in Vienna where it would be accessible for Central European markets.¹⁹⁷ By June of that year, Bedson was offered the post of Agent General in that office.

When he first arrived in Saskatchewan, Bedson had signed a two-year contract with the government to serve as Clerk of the Executive Council. One year later, his services were no longer required. His removal was due to a miscommunication with Premier Devine over a briefing about raises for three senior Government officials. Devine and Bedson did not enjoy the same

¹⁹⁵ Derek Bedson to Ray Hnatyshyn, May 18, 1982

¹⁹⁶ Saskatchewan Government News Release 'Premier Devine announces new Cabinet Secretary', May 10, 1982

¹⁹⁷ Derek Bedson to Grant Devine, January 21, 1983; the memorandum had recommended Dusseldorf for Central Europe, but did not mention Vienna at that time.

professional relationship as he had with the premiers he served in Manitoba.¹⁹⁸ Unlike his dismissal in Manitoba, he was reassigned. According to one report, Bedson anticipated his removal as Clerk and had secured himself an appointment in the government's London office. His title was to be "special advisor to the Premier", but there was nothing in his personal papers to indicate that he had arranged such an appointment.¹⁹⁹

Bedson had been philosophically predisposed to conservatism all his life, and both his father and grandfather were conservatives. In his letters home, he wrote about his disdain for the Liberal government or even those with liberal or leftist views. Bedson's dislike of the Liberal government was so strong that he even briefly contemplated remaining in Britain after he graduated from Oxford at a time when Britain was in an economic shambles. His opinions on socialism and communism were also indicative of his conservative nature. Even his sense of humour was partisan. In an interview he gave in 1977, Bedson compared the old columns and arches at MacKenzie King's home at Kingsmere to the Liberal party "something totally pointless which leaves the country in ruins."²⁰⁰ In conversation with journalist Ted Byfield, who had asked about his tendency to moan, Bedson flippantly

¹⁹⁸ Richard Cleroux 'A class act who didn't fit', *The Globe & Mail*, May 12, 1983

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

replied, “Moaning is an indispensable part of Canadian government. That’s Alberta’s trouble. You don’t moan well. You go down to Ottawa all fury and fire. The Grits respect moaning. They do it so well themselves.”²⁰¹

His religious beliefs were considerably stronger than most people, and reflected his sense of devotion and loyalty. As a result, Bedson took controversial stands on issues within the Anglican Church of Canada such as the ordination of women and the proposed union of the Anglican and United Churches. His decision to leave the Anglican Church was due to his belief that the Church was ignoring what he believed were fundamental truths and valuable traditions. Like his political views, those whom he worked with and for knew his religious views. They did not interfere with his duties as Clerk of the Executive Council. There has been not one confirmed example of Derek Bedson having ever been disloyal to the people whom he served. He regarded himself as carrying on a tradition of public service. Bedson, his father, and his grandfather have been highly praised by many for their respective duties. In 1978, Derek Bedson became an officer of the Order of Canada for his dedication to public service. Even Bill Janssen and Howard Pawley acknowledge his loyalty, but claim to have felt uncomfortable with his

²⁰⁰ Robert Collison *Saturday Night* (May 1977), p.19

²⁰¹ Ted Byfield *Western Report*, p.52

presence at cabinet meetings and the dismissal of the three deputy ministers. He rose through the ranks of the civil service because of his devotion to duty and the loyalty that won him respect that crossed ideological lines.

As far as Bedson having too much influence or power, that notion has been proven to be false. By examining his duties with George Drew, John Diefenbaker, and the premiers he served, it becomes obvious that whatever influence or power he had was limited according to the parameters established by his superiors. He was not a hatchet man nor was he politically active. His perception of his duties would allow neither.

Bedson's relationships with the premiers he served clearly indicate that he could co-exist with them whatever their politics and the direction they chose for governing Manitoba. His administrative abilities were recognized by all of them and were highly valued by all of them, especially Ed Schreyer. Bedson also won praise for his abilities when it came to protocol and is one of the first things brought up when his name is mentioned. His abilities were considered valuable by Ontario's provincial government who had hired him to work in their trade office in Brussels before Saskatchewan's Conservative government pleaded with him to accept their offer to have him serve as their Clerk of the Executive Council. Although he had a falling out with Grant Devine's government, he was reassigned to serve as their trade representative

in Vienna.

As for his presence at the dismissal of Lionel Orlikow, Marv Nordman, and Bill Janssen, Bedson was asked to be there. Lyon had made the decision and he decided the timing of their dismissal. There is no evidence that Bedson had ever been involved in the decision to dismiss them no matter the reason for his being there.

When Bedson himself was dismissed in 1981, Saul Cherniack had mentioned that the N.D.P. dismissals of Conservatives did not compare with the bloodletting of 1977.²⁰² There was, however, no evidence to indicate that such a “bloodletting” took place. The media had reported that in 1977, the Lyon administration had planned to purge the civil service yet this was not the case. By 1980, the Conservatives had fired 49 senior officers from branch director to deputy minister levels. They were replaced with a total of 62 senior bureaucrats, 32 hired from outside and 30 promoted from within. By 1980, there were 275 senior civil servants compared to only 264 three years earlier.²⁰³

Howard Pawley’s concerns about Bedson’s presence at cabinet meetings also rings hollow. According to Christopher Dunn who extensively

²⁰² ‘Cabinet clerk first casualty in transition’ *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 26, 1981

²⁰³ *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 27, 1981

interviewed Edward Schreyer, Bedson was only present at the morning cabinet sessions at which government business was discussed while the afternoon sessions discussed political matters. Bedson was not present at those meetings. As for the parlay between the Japanese consul and Schreyer, there is no one from the N.D.P. who can validate this story. Schreyer himself did not comment on it.

Derek Bedson's career as the Clerk of the Executive Council came to an end all because of alleged disloyalty. No evidence exists that substantiates arguments against him. When he was dismissed as Clerk of the Executive Council in Saskatchewan, he was made a scapegoat because of miscommunication between the cabinet and the senior administration. To this day, former N.D.P. premier Ed Schreyer still believes in Bedson's propriety.

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