

In connection with the Peace Settlement at the close of the First World War, public comment, while not unintelligent, showed a lack of background of parliamentary discussion and of informed interest. This was largely because at the end of 1918, the settlement to be reached was largely a European one, not touching the Americas except indirectly. Likewise, in the United States, although President Wilson played a powerful role in the peace negotiations, the Americans soon retreated from any active concern in the resultant League of Nations; an era of "isolationism" commenced. When the Peace Treaties were signed and brought back to Canada, there was manifested a somewhat similar unwillingness of parliament to give any serious consideration to the terms of settlement as such. "The debates in both Houses", Glazebrook comments, "appear long, but they are in fact devoted very largely to the constitutional implication. The ministers, who as plenipotentiaries had gone through the educational experiences of the Paris conference, did their best to place before Parliament the character of the treaties themselves,

(Cont) policy and its diplomatic execution are concerned it certainly makes for weakness unless the public is really well-informed, logically and emotionally consistent, and willing to allow its official servants to do their work with as little interruption as possible. And it is not easy to see how these conditions can even be fully realized in practice."
(Lord Strang: The Foreign Office, p.45.)