

“unchallenged but not unchallengeable.”⁴² Although officials generally expressed a reasonable degree of confidence about Canada’s title, nagging doubts such as Wrong’s were not infrequent. Nevertheless, Ottawa always proceeded as if it did indeed have sovereignty, and Canadian dealings with the United States during the war were, in general, both confident and successful. The first American request came in August 1941, even before the United States had entered the war (docs 549-553). The US wished to establish stations on Baffin Island and in northern Quebec for meteorological observations, and also for ferrying aircraft to Britain as part of the Lend-Lease agreement. Since the request was in itself an implicit acknowledgement of Canada’s sovereignty, there was no alarm on this score in Ottawa. Prime Minister King gave his permission, provided that Canada reserved the right to replace the US facilities with its own.

The later US activities in the Canadian Northwest are extensively covered in the regular *DCER* volumes (see appendix to Part Six). However, one major thread was omitted. Many historical accounts have focused on the April 1943 report to Prime Minister King from the British High Commissioner, Malcolm MacDonald. This report, printed in Volume 9, presented a highly alarming picture of the overwhelming and largely unregulated US military presence.⁴³ A response from Keenleyside (then the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs) appeared in the same volume. Keenleyside was far less perturbed than MacDonald, noting that the difficulties described in MacDonald’s memo were “both real and imagined.” Keenleyside mentioned that the problem of US officers taking action without prior permission from Ottawa had already been “pretty completely solved” and that “a regularization of the whole procedure along lines approved by Canada” would soon be in place.⁴⁴ However, since no documents to back up these statements were printed, Keenleyside’s contentions have largely been ignored. The present volume includes a series of documents (554-569), dating from September 1942 to June 1943, which demonstrate that Keenleyside’s more confident attitude was fully justified. Keenleyside had been alerted to the need for more consultation seven months before MacDonald made his report, and with the full co-operation of senior US officials, the Department of External Affairs had negotiated a satisfactory arrangement. This agreement was embodied in a memo by Lewis Clark of the US Legation in Ottawa (doc. 569).

Gibson, meanwhile, had not ceased his eagle-eyed watchfulness for any possible threats to Canadian sovereignty in the archipelago. Inspired by a newspaper article suggesting that the postwar era might bring questions about Canada’s title, in January 1944 he suggested to RCMP Commissioner Stuart Wood that new activity in the high Arctic by the *St. Roch* would be valuable (docs

⁴² Hume Wrong, memo to A.D.P. Heency, 24 June 1946, *DCER*, vol. 12, doc. 921. Wrong’s statement, like so many others, shows a failure to understand the importance of the Eastern Greenland decision for Canada’s case. It resembles Wershof’s 1940 view rather than Skelton’s.

⁴³ MacDonald memo, 6 April 1943, *DCER*, vol. 9, doc. 1253.

⁴⁴ Keenleyside memo, 9 April 1943, *ibid.*, doc. 1255.