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interests in the world from the lingering effects of British presumption and Imperial influence as from his overly intrusive work habits and occasionally acerbic manner. The Under-Secretary's blunt disposition, however, certainly led him to be forthright, analytical and firm in his judgments. European governments, he thought, were overly addicted to power politics in their behaviours abroad and to the service of unreasonably privileged ruling classes at home. A better brand of international affairs would come, not from the ill-advised use of military force, but from the exercise of reason by leaders whose roots were planted in a truly free and democratic politics. Perhaps this was the heritage that later led John Holmes, another of Canada's revered scholar-diplomats – a plentiful community, as it has turned out – to note that "Canadians come of Messianic stock," that "the spirits of John Knox and Jean de Brebeuf haunt them," and that they have been indoctrinated further by the Americans "with the assumption that a nation must be ordained for a benevolent political purpose."

Such predispositions are certainly with us today. In our own time, however, it seems to me that there is as much of John Wesley as there is of John Knox in Canadian ruminations on Canada's proper role in world affairs. Perhaps this is not surprising. The United Church emerged as a major force in Canada's life through the combining in 1925 of 70 per cent of our Presbyterians and all of our Methodists, Congregationalists and members of the Union Churches of Western Canada under a single roof. I am no student of the history of this typically Canadian approach to the papering over of minor differences, much less of the theological niceties that may have been involved, but in retrospect it would appear that the Methodists soon came to dominate the newly integrated canon (as it related, at least, to practice here on earth). We have less now by way of thunderings from the pulpit in response to the sins of the Pharisees and fewer lectures by far on the virtue of looking after our own fates. On the other hand, we hear much more of the need to forgive and nurture the fallen, and protect and empower the weak. The premise is not that God helps those who help themselves. The argument instead is that God helps those who help others. Translated into secular form, this principle infuses our political culture and the chatter it generates – although it still seems to leave room aplenty for our abiding love of property and for the quietly self-interested pursuit of it by our established classes in particular, and by most of the rest of us as best we can.