

shall one say the infrequency of discussion on international questions which directly concern Canada, and to which Canada is directing more attention at international conferences, and the fact that public papers are singularly infrequent and not always very helpful. It may be said with proper respect, the question that one asks oneself in this: can Parliament give the lead to Canadian public opinion on international questions which, in many respects, the country is prepared for, and which the amount of cable information received should tend to prepare the public of Canada to understand and welcome?

Mr. Bourassa: Do not forget that we are living in an age of democracy, and Parliament must not lead, but must be led.

Mr. Spry: Mr. Walter Bagehot, in his book on English Constitution, deals with that general point, and says that Parliament should not only be led, but should also lead; should educate. Quoting from a speech delivered by the Prime Minister Mr. King on March 14, 1930, page 631, "There is the necessity of an administration having the backing of public opinion before it can effectively take any steps whatsoever. It sometimes takes a little while for public opinion to ripen sufficiently to make itself felt throughout the country." (1)

Two days prior to Mr. Spry's remarks, however, Dr. O.D. Skelton had addressed the Committee in a somewhat more optimistic vein. Referring to a recent debate on international matters in the House of Commons, he said:

In reading the report of that debate, I was, in fact, struck by the large proportion of members of the House who indicated such a vital interest in the subject of international affairs, and who evinced such distinct and independent opinions, and all this in spite of the fact that I do not think one of them had ever been exposed to a professor of international relations or held a scholarship of international travel. However, I suppose there is nothing good that cannot be made better. . .

(1) Minutes of Select Standing Committee on Industrial and International Relations, March 27, 1930, p.29.