



W. L. Mackenzie King

No doubt the Rockefellers also approved the methods through which industrial harmony was achieved in Nazi Germany!

One is often led to reflect, when reading these pages, that King's biographer must be possessed not only of hindsight but also of great determination to find acceptable reason and reasonable clarity where all others found obscurity. The author accepts as his guide to understanding the public actions and utterances of Mackenzie King a quite selective employment of King's private account of events as related to his diary. No doubt Neatby's problem was to find a balance between the terribly revealing and the equally self-serving. As indicated above, he occasionally fails. Moreover, at some points the diary (as representative of the private and inner man) and the official papers (as representative of the public and political man) become one and the same. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that there were occasions on which parts of the diary were written at least some days after the events in question. For example, on Page 281, Neatby cites the diary entry for May 13, 1938, on the subject of the British Commonwealth Air-Training Scheme. It is interesting that this same excerpt appears in the files of the Department of External Affairs in a memorandum describing a conversation with the British High Commissioner, Sir Francis Flood, on May 16, 1938. The only difference is that the diary employs the phrase "European war" whereas the memorandum substitutes "European conflict". There is, of course, the more fundamental consideration of whether, indeed, it is sound scholarship to use King to interpret King. The King diary is not a Rosetta Stone.

Magnitude of task

Still, these may be considered as relatively minor points when compared to the magnitude of Professor Neatby's task. He has taken 13 years between Volume II and III, sufficient time for mature and thorough consideration. Certainly, time enough to master things not obvious to those not equally immersed in the period of the 1930s: for example, how to differentiate between the Conservative "depression" of 1935 and the Liberal "recession" of 1937. That said, Neatby's portrait of R. B. Bennett seems fair, in its context. This is an important point, as Professor Neatby knows well. Since his work on King precedes any important biography of Bennett, Bennett's biographer, when he appears, will have in some measure to write his account according to Neatby's (King's) rules. It can be demon-