

So is the publication of the foreign policy papers. Their value in the longer term will depend not upon the ammunition they give to the Government's critics and how well that ammunition is used but upon the quality, point and effectiveness of the public discussion they engender.

So now you know, I hope, why the papers were published. How were they written? A prominent Toronto paper told its readers that in the foreign policy papers the Government had forced its position upon the experienced officers in the Department of External Affairs, while a prominent Montreal newspaper said that the obscurantists in the bureaucracy had again succeeded in blurring the clear outlines of the Government's policy. "You pays pays your money and you takes your choice."

Let me describe the process as it really happened. First, background papers were prepared by many agencies and departments of Government. These were then collated and reduced to reports of fairly manageable size. Meetings were held between officials and academics, businessmen and others with special interests and knowledge under the auspices of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Perhaps some of you here took part in these meetings. They were a learning process in themselves. The first, on Europe, was perhaps little more than a lesson in how not to do it. The last, on the Pacific, was a lively and rewarding experience for all concerned.

When the papers reached the Cabinet, they represented a distillation of two years' work and experience. They provoked lively discussions in Cabinet committees over a period of weeks; they bounced back and forth from Cabinet committees to officials until the Cabinet could issue them to the public as a clear statement of the Government's views about the foreign policy for Canadians.

I come now to the heart of the matter, to a discussion of what the papers contain and where they take us.

Carrying out the review involved identifying and challenging the assumptions on which Canadian foreign policy has been based. One assumption, however, had to be made, "...that for most Canadians their 'political' well-being can only be assured if Canada continues in being as an independent, democratic and sovereign state". Without this assumption any discussion of a foreign policy for Canadians would be meaningless. Unless we are independent and sovereign, we have no need for a foreign policy. Unless we are democratic there is no point in public discussion.

The paper continues:

"Some Canadians might hold that Canada could have a higher standard of living by giving up its sovereign independence and joining the United States. Others might argue that Canadians would be better off with a lower standard of living but with fewer limiting commitments and a greater degree of freedom of action, both political and economic.