Western University

From the Selected Works of Paul W Nesbitt-Larking

1996

Canadian Prime Ministers in the House of Commons: Patterns of Intervention

J. Crimmins
Paul W Nesbitt-Larking

FRANK CASS JOURNALS

JOURNAL OFFPRINT

Frank Cass, Newbury House
890-900 Eastern Avenue, London IG2 7HH, UK
Tel: 0181 599 8866 Fax: 0181 599 0984
In USA Frank Cass, c/o ISBS, 5804 NE Hassalo Street
Portland, OR 97213-3644, USA
Tel: (503) 287-3093, (800) 944-6190 Fax: (503) 280-8832

Canadian Prime Ministers in the House of Commons: Patterns of Intervention

JAMES E. CRIMMINS AND
PAUL NESBITT-LARKING

This paper explores the parliamentary activity of six Canadian prime ministers from St Laurent to Mulroney. Employing *Hansard*, each parliamentary utterance by a prime minister from 1949 to 1993 has been coded into one of four categories: answers to questions, speeches delivered, statements made and other interventions. Voting records have also been coded. Employing this database, the analysis compares and contrasts the prime ministers in terms of their political personalities and explores the overall scope and character of prime-ministerial activism in the House throughout the past 40 years. Canadian profiles are compared with already existing British data in order to test generalisations concerning the diminishing presence of prime ministers in parliaments in Canada and Britain.

In Westminster systems of government sovereignty rests *de jure* with the Crown in Parliament. Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 recognises this in declaring the constitution to be 'similar in principle' to that of the United Kingdom. Constitutional convention has also concentrated *de facto* power in the hands of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in the House of Commons. While the Prime Minister in Canada has always occupied an extraordinarily powerful place, the essence of the parliamentary system is the fusion of

James E. Crimmins is an Associate Professor and Dean, Arts and Social Science and Paul Nesbitt-Larking is Assistant Professor, both at Huron College, The University of Western Ontario, Canada.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Montreal, Quebec, 6 June 1995. We are most grateful to Philip Norton, two anonymous reviewers of this journal and our colleagues David Blair, Alfred L. Chan, William Matheson, Louis Massicotte, Brendan O'Leary and Garth Stevenson for their generosity in offering critical commentary on this paper. We wish to acknowledge the work of our research assistant, Ruth Belcher, who applied herself diligently to the painstaking task of compiling the data upon which this paper is based. We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of Huron College in the preparation of this paper

executive and legislative powers and the responsibility of the executive to the scrutiny of Parliament. Given the central importance of this relationship between the Prime Minister and the House of Commons, there has been surprisingly little systematic exploration of executive-legislative relations in Canada. This paper investigates such relations through an empirical analysis of the recorded interventions of recent prime ministers in the House of Commons. Using *Hansard*, each separate utterance or intervention of Canada's prime ministers from 1949 to 1993 has been recorded: St Laurent, 1948-57; Diefenbaker, 1957-63; Pearson, 1963-68; Trudeau, 1968-79, 1980-84; Clark, 1979-80 and Mulroney, 1984-93.¹ The details of the way in which we have classified utterances (answers to questions, statements, speeches and other types of intervention) and the methodology employed to summarise and compare them are explained below and in the Appendix.

The goals of this paper are threefold: first, to confront with empirical evidence some of the impressionistic and speculative comments about the parliamentary performances of prime ministers from St Laurent to Mulroney; secondly, to trace and analyse patterns of parliamentary performance among the six sitting Canadian prime ministers throughout the period from 1949 to 1993; and, thirdly, to compare and contrast the parliamentary performance of Canadian prime ministers with that of their British counterparts during the same period. Given the preliminary character of our research at this stage, in conjunction with the general absence of other reliable literature in this field, much of our work is tentative, exploratory and grounded in the data we have thus far compiled.

The paper establishes three distinct propositions related to the three goals articulated above. Given the complexity of the institutions, persons and events involved as well as the uniqueness of each prime-ministerial case, these propositions should be regarded as *contentions* to be explored rather than narrow *hypotheses* to be proven on the basis of particular empirical results. Most essentially, the propositions provide a coherent framework for analysis.

Proposition One

Related to the first goal, proposition one constitutes a systematic assessment of the broad political psychological disposition of each of the prime ministers as it is manifest in their behaviour in the House. Lasswell's taxonomy of political personalities provides relevant categories for the classification of Canada's recent prime ministers and facilitates a clear empirical evaluation of what has been written about them.² Lasswell identifies three fundamental personality types: the agitator - dramatic, grandiose, provocative, tending to promote bold and grand schemes, confused and frustrated by bureaucratic detail and skilled in mass

communications;³ the administrator – insecure, compulsive, neurotic, conventional, rigid, humourless, unimaginative and conscientiously efficient;⁴ and the theorist – cool, detached, calculating, argumentative and rational with a passion for academic debate and intellectual rigour.⁵ Based upon impressionistic comments made about the parliamentary behaviour of Canada's recent prime ministers, to be presented below, Diefenbaker emerges as an agitator; Trudeau as a theorist; while St Laurent, Pearson and Clark are classified as administrators. Because of the paucity of literature on Mulroney's tenure as Prime Minister, he cannot at present be classified.

On the basis of these expectations, it is reasonable to assume that there will be substantial differences between agitators, administrators and theorists with respect to their patterns of intervention in the House of Commons. Agitators should score higher than either administrators or theorists in terms of the number of speeches delivered and the number of interventions in debate; administrators should exceed both agitators and theorists in terms of the number of statements made and divisions attended per session; theorists should score lower in both overall attendance scores and all specific activism scores, with the exception of responses to questions, than either agitators or administrators.

Proposition Two

While the systematic assessment of political psychology is necessary, it is unlikely to be sufficient in explaining patterns of prime-ministerial behaviour in the House of Commons. Irrespective of any distinctions in psychology between individual prime ministers, it is probable that, on the basis of structural, political or institutional causes, general changes in patterns of prime-ministerial intervention can be discerned over time. Our paper consists of a partial replication of a number of recent studies on the parliamentary activity of British prime ministers.⁶ The British data reveal a substantial and cumulative decline in prime-ministerial activism in the House of Commons since the 1940s.⁷ Since Canada's parliamentary system shares much in common with Britain, including the fusion of legislative and executive powers, it is anticipated that Canadian patterns will be close to those found in Britain.

It follows that in terms of each of the four types of prime-ministerial intervention as well as in terms of overall levels of attendance, the profile of Canadian prime ministers in the House of Commons from 1949 to 1993 should approximate to the British pattern.

Proposition Three

Countering the logic of this proposition is the fact that the British and Canadian constitutions also *differ* fundamentally. Most importantly, Britain

is a unitary state and Canada is federal. From the early 1960s federal-provincial relations have come to dominate the agenda of each of Canada's prime ministers. The practice of 'executive federalism', as manifest from the 1960s until very recently in continuous rounds of federal-provincial diplomacy, conferences, resolutions, charters, accords and referenda, has resulted in national decision-making taking place at some considerable distance from the House of Commons.⁸ It is widely accepted that this increase in inter-state federalism has diminished both the relevance of the federal House of Commons in general as well as the accountability of the Prime Minister to the House in particular.⁹

In terms of each of the four types of prime-ministerial intervention as well as in terms of overall levels of attendance, it might be expected that the profile of Canadian prime ministers in the House of Commons from 1949 to 1993 will differ substantially from the British pattern. In establishing proposition three as a counter to proposition two, we are able to provide a preliminary answer to whether underlying circumstances governing patterns of prime-ministerial activism in Canada are distinctive or whether they share something with those in Britain.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study is modelled on the British research of Dunleavy, Jones and their colleagues.¹⁰ The basic unit of analysis is the parliamentary session. The six Canadian prime ministers cover between them 40 sessions from 1949 to 1993.¹¹ The nearest comparable set of British data consists of the 41 sessions of eight British prime ministers from Churchill in 1951 to Thatcher in 1990. Working from the pages of *Hansard*, we have recorded the utterances of each prime minister into one of four categories: answers to questions, statements, speeches and other interventions. To be counted as a response to a question, the utterance must occur in Question Period and must be an oral answer. Statements include formal and routine reports from conferences, reports on government action, matters concerning government bills, announcements of by-elections, reports from the Governor General and other such items. Speeches are often, but not always, substantial normative presentations of the government's or the state's position on a matter of public interest or concern. Speeches also include a few short personal statements of congratulations or commiserations. The category of 'other interventions' includes occasional comments, interjections or interruptions raised by the Prime Minister in debate or very occasionally at other times (for full details of the coding criteria, see the Appendix).

The raw data consist of a series of check marks on coding sheets,

identifying each occurrence of a specified type of intervention. Following the British methodology,¹² our analysis begins by calculating the number of times in each session a prime minister made a particular type of intervention, *adjusted for the average session length across the entire data set*. This adjustment is necessary in order to be able to compare the relative magnitude of prime-ministerial interventions within each of the four types of intervention across quite disparate sessions. The 40 sessions vary widely in number of days, from 49 to 594, with an average length of 160.1. To explain the adjustment technique further, were we simply to present the raw data for each session then comparisons among them would be quite misleading, since – other things being equal – the longer the session, the greater would be the number of interventions. The formula for calculating each prime minister's rate of intervention is:

$$Ax (D/Nx)$$

where:

Ax = the actual score in session 'x' for the specified type of intervention;

D = the mean number of days per session across the data set as a whole;

Nx = the number of days in session 'x'

To illustrate this, suppose there were 40 statements in a 200-day session, the calculation would be: $40 (160.1/200) = 32.02$. Having calculated these data, it is possible to track the intervention rates of each prime minister in each of the four categories across sessions and to explore trends comparatively among the prime ministers.

We provide a summary measure of each prime minister for the combined total of his sessions. This is calculated by adding the adjusted scores for each type of intervention in each session and then dividing that total by the number of sessions. These data are presented in Table 1. Figures 1 to 4 display the adjusted scores for each type of intervention and each session.

In attempting to compare the *total* rate of intervention in their research on British prime ministers, Dunleavy *et al.* standardised the scores for each type and then created an index composed of the sum of the four standardised scores for each session.¹³ We are able to do the same with the Canadian data by controlling the actual score of each prime minister in each session and each type of intervention by the relevant means and standard deviations of all prime ministers across the 40 sessions.¹⁴ This procedure allows us to create a balanced composite index of prime-ministerial total activism by adding the four scores for each session. The results of this transformation are displayed in Figure 5.

FIGURE 1
PRIME MINISTERS - QUESTIONS ANSWERED

FIGURE 2
PRIME MINISTERS - STATEMENTS MADE

FIGURE 3
PRIME MINISTERS - SPEECHES DELIVERED

FIGURE 4
PRIME MINISTERS - OTHER INTERVENTIONS

Canada's leaders. Some commentators have identified key differences between Canadian prime ministers. Bliss, R.M. Dawson, Hockin, Matheson, Punnett and Smith, among others, agree in their estimation of 'strong' parliamentarians, who relished life in the House, and 'weak' parliamentarians, for whom attendance in the House was a burdensome duty. Of the six prime ministers under discussion in this paper, Diefenbaker is universally regarded as a strong parliamentarian, while St Laurent and Pearson are considered weak. Clark and Trudeau have had a mixed press, while Mulroney has not yet received much attention from scholars. Lasswell's taxonomy, introduced earlier, is better able to capture the essential distinctions in political psychology between Canada's prime ministers than the rudimentary strong/weak model. Moreover, in establishing some theory-informed criteria for classification, the taxonomy encourages a more rigorous comparison among the prime ministers. Robert Craig Brown's words of caution concerning interpretations of political leaders in Canada illustrate the limits of the loose impressionistic approach: 'Perceptions of political leadership are like images in a hall of mirrors. They are partial, shifting, transitory. They often reveal more of the eye and mind of the beholder than of the image reflected'.¹⁸ This insight lends support to the strategy of attempting to find some metric, some objective criteria assessed in the light of theory-driven expectations. Our first proposition will now be investigated in detail.

The Agitator

Diefenbaker is said to have been a true 'House of Commons man'. Throughout his 17 years in the House before he became Prime Minister in 1957, Diefenbaker acquired a reputation as a powerful and passionate speech-maker and an enthusiastic contributor to debate. Such patterns of parliamentary behaviour fit with Lasswell's profile of an agitator. Diefenbaker's nearest rival with respect to parliamentary experience was Pearson, who had 14.5 years in the House before becoming Prime Minister. As we shall see, Pearson's experience of the House was entirely different. Other prime ministers acquired very little prior experience. St Laurent and Clark each had seven years, Trudeau two and a half and Mulroney less than one. Irrespective of his longevity, commentators point to Diefenbaker's political personality to explain his enthusiasm for parliamentary affairs. He is said to have loved the pomp, the grandiloquence, the rhetoric and the drama of the House and relished making speeches and intervening in the cut and thrust of debate.¹⁹ While there is strong agreement on these characteristics, we should not overlook Newman's comment that while Diefenbaker was highly effective in the House in *opposition*, he handled himself less well as Prime Minister and allowed the baiting of the

opposition parties to aggravate him.²⁰ This would appear to fit the profile of the agitator: capable of stinging criticism of others and grand gestures, but confused and frustrated with the details of administration, unwilling to learn from others, to compromise and to practice the art of *realpolitik*.

TABLE I
AVERAGE ADJUSTED SCORES OF PRIME-MINISTERIAL INTERVENTION FOR CANADIAN
PRIME MINISTERS 1949-93

	Questions Answered	Statements Made	Speeches Delivered	Other Interventions	% Att.	% Div.
St. Laurent	91.3	21.1	35.9	33.7	77.1	75.9
Diefenbaker	131.8	34.3	40.4	38.9	88.1	70.0
Pearson	121.2	16.7	21.3	15.9	81.9	56.9
Trudeau	111.1	7.7	9.5	10.2	73.8	67.4
Clark	137.2	9.8	13.1	3.3	91.8	100.0
Mulroney	69.5	1.2	7.1	1.0	47.2	15.9

% Att. = percentage attendance. This figure is the percentage of all possible sitting days for which there is a record of at least one prime-ministerial intervention.

% Div. = voting activism. This figure expresses the number of days on which a Prime Minister is recorded as having taken part in at least one division as a percentage of the total number of days on which there was at least one division.

As the profile of the agitator suggests, Diefenbaker emerges in the empirical data as the most active of recent prime ministers in the House. Table 1, which displays the average adjusted scores for each prime minister in each category of intervention as well as other data, clearly reveals this.²¹ The image of Diefenbaker as highly active is also apparent in Figure 5, where, with the exception of his first session, Diefenbaker is well above the average in terms of overall activism for each of his seven sessions in power. Once the exceptional forty-nine days of Clark are excluded, Diefenbaker's presence in the House is highest in every category, but one. As expected, Diefenbaker is highest in terms of speechmaking and other interventions, but his statement score is even more impressive. Here Diefenbaker exceeds the rate of his nearest rival by a wide margin. Given the number of years in which he was Prime Minister, Diefenbaker's attendance rate of over 88 per cent is high. The profile is indeed of a 'House of Commons man'. What is perhaps most striking is the continuity of Diefenbaker's presence in the House, even during some difficult years of controversy. The consistency of Diefenbaker's attendance, following his minority session in 1957, is clearly manifest in the data.

The Administrators

According to Smith, among others, the performance of St Laurent in the House, which was indifferent to weak in the first place, became progressively more feeble as his term in office continued.²² Characterised as 'Uncle Louis', St Laurent appears to have been a competent administrator in his early years, with a reputation for discretion and good humour, but also for parsimony, for not speaking very often in the House, and, when speaking, for being concise.²³ Following the notorious pipeline debate of 1956, he appears to have become ever more reticent in his contributions in the Commons.²⁴ St Laurent emerges in the literature as a genial front man for the government, content to leave the details to the Ministers around him. If such an 'administrator' profile is correct, we would expect, according to the first proposition, to see a relatively high level of formal statement-making in the House and a high level of attendance for divisions, combined with low levels of speech-making and intervention in debate. We will test these expectations later in this section.

According to Dyck and to Punnett, despite their comparable years of service prior to becoming Prime Minister, Diefenbaker was infinitely more comfortable in the House than Pearson.²⁵ Despite his lengthy apprenticeship, Pearson seems to have taken little joy in its business,²⁶ at times appearing uncertain and easily confused by parliamentary debating techniques.²⁷ Judy La Marsh criticised Pearson for his infrequent attendance and, in general, for his failure to be in tune with the mood of either the House or of caucus.²⁸ Pearson would not have argued with much of this assessment, reporting that:

the House of Commons was an intimidating rather than an inviting place in which to speak ... much of the debating seemed artificial, a kind of play-acting ... I did not have that interest in the classic cut and thrust of partisan exchange dear to so many others ... I was not, I fear, a House of Commons man in the popular sense of the term ... as a Minister and especially as a Prime Minister, my attendance had to be limited.²⁹

However, there are ways of contributing to Parliament other than through the making of great speeches and engaging in the bombast of debate, and Hutchison points out that Pearson was noted for giving reports to Parliament of Government activities and initiatives.³⁰ Our data permit us to test this claim and other elements of the commonly held view of Pearson's parliamentary career as Prime Minister. For example, was he a poor attender in the Commons compared to other prime ministers? From the data in Table 1, clearly not. Three of the six prime ministers in our study

attended the House proportionally on fewer occasions than Pearson, with only Diefenbaker and the short-termed Clark attending on more occasions.

Not a great deal has been written about the short period of Joe Clark's prime-ministerial presence in the House of Commons. Both Troyer and Simpson comment upon his respect for parliamentary traditions and the rights of its members, characteristics suggestive of the 'administrator' rather than the 'agitator' or 'theorist'.³¹ Sawatsky also makes reference to Clark's presence in the House of Commons, describing him as well-organised and effective in his relentless attacks on Trudeau in the late 1970s.³²

In the light of the fragments and conjectures about St Laurent in the House of Commons, described above, there are some confirmations and surprises both in Table 1 and in Figure 5. St Laurent's attendance in the House was, along with Pearson's, relatively low, as we might anticipate – but only in contrast with Diefenbaker and the short-lived session of Clark. In literal terms, St Laurent and Pearson were better 'House of Commons men' than either Trudeau or – especially – Mulroney. Figure 5 lends support to Smith's contention that St Laurent's activism in the House gradually diminished during his term in office. He ranks lowest apart from the infrequently attending Mulroney, in the category of questions answered (see Table 1 and Figure 1). St Laurent was particularly low in the period 1951 to 1954, perhaps reflecting the 'business as usual' and politically stable climate of the time. On the other hand, he was a relatively regular contributor to debate and, in this respect, his rate far exceeds that of Pearson, Trudeau and Mulroney and almost equals that of Diefenbaker. In Lasswellian terms, the outgoing character of St Laurent marks him as an administrator with a touch of the agitator.³³ Those who were at the receiving end of his occasional bursts of invective and anger, such as opposition members in the Suez debate of 1956, would attest to this.³⁴ As one might expect from a good administrator, St Laurent scores relatively high in the 'statement' category (see Figure 2). However, the trend in statement-making from St Laurent and Diefenbaker to Mulroney shows a clear decline, conditioned perhaps by the exponential increase in mass-mediated modes of communication. The almost complete abandonment of statements as a method of communication by Mulroney is a notable feature in Figure 2 and Table 1. It is also noteworthy that Pearson, in many ways a prime minister with a similar parliamentary profile to St Laurent, does not have a particularly high score in the 'statement' category. The very fact that Diefenbaker scores so highly in this category while other 'administrators' do not leads to the conclusion that factors other than personality offer more plausible explanations of the trends. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that a similar pattern of decline can be detected in the 'speech' category,

displayed in Figure 3. Despite his purported reticence, St Laurent ranks only slightly behind Diefenbaker in this category. Even Clark, who in other ways was active in the House, made relatively few speeches. Diefenbaker certainly emerges as a strong speech-maker, thus supporting the generally received view of his reputation. However, he seems to be the last to have used Parliament as a platform for his views in this manner. Since then, television has obviated the need for prime ministers to speak to the House. In this context, it should be noted that Gwyn's argument concerning the impact of television in the House on reducing the number of speeches after 1978 is not supported.³⁵ Our data in Figure 3 show the watershed to be 1970, the beginning of Trudeau's second session.³⁶ As anticipated in our first proposition, St Laurent is relatively high in terms of the percentage of divisions attended and, with the exception of Clark, exceeds all other prime ministers in this regard. The proposition is, however, weakened by the fact that Pearson, who is also an administrator, scores relatively low in this category.

Pearson's attendance in the House is in the low 80 per cent range. While this level does not equal Diefenbaker, the claims made by LaMarsh that Pearson's attendance was 'infrequent' seem exaggerated. Pearson is slightly above average in the category of questions answered and his levels of speech-making and statements are close to the averages of all six prime ministers. It should, however, be noted that, even though Pearson's attendance at Question Period was relatively high, the character of his responses to questions was clipped, formal and abrupt. He would often simply declare: 'No, Mr Speaker.'

It is worth speculating whether the fact that Pearson was obliged to govern with a minority throughout his term had any impact upon his performance. This can best be addressed by considering the levels of prime-ministerial activism during *all* minority administrations. Diefenbaker had two minority sessions, Trudeau three and Clark's sole session was a minority government. Two interesting conjectures about the performance of prime ministers in the House during minority governments are: first, that the situation makes the Prime Minister more attentive to the House³⁷ and, secondly, that the minority situation makes the Prime Minister more circumspect and cautious.³⁸ In order to conduct a preliminary exploration into these contentions, we have undertaken two types of comparison. A comparison of the average normalised activism scores for majority and minority governments shows there to be little difference. (Majority = -0.05, minority = 0.14). However, a comparison of the average percentage attendance rates of prime ministers shows there to be a substantially higher rate among prime ministers in minority situations. (Majority = 74.19 per cent, minority = 82.35 per cent). It would be unwise to read too much into

these results. Nonetheless, the first test seems to reduce the plausibility of either contention – prime ministers' activism levels are unrelated to whether they have a majority or minority. The second test would appear to show that minority governments oblige prime ministers to attend the House at a higher rate. A closer look at the data, however, challenges the apparent simplicity of the result. The lowest rates of attendance occur in the sessions of Trudeau after 1974 and throughout the Mulroney years. These are the sessions which contribute most to the lower average attendance rate of the 'majority' prime ministers. Trudeau's attendance in the minority years from 1972 to 1974 was actually higher than his attendance in his majority sessions. Two further points are worth noting: (1) the absence of any minority sessions in the Mulroney years reduces the impact of the statistical finding; (2) Diefenbaker's minority session in 1957 constitutes by far his *lowest* level of attendance. The most that can be claimed is that minority government situations are often associated with high rates of prime-ministerial attendance in the House. This lends some support, albeit qualified, to the contention that minority governments make prime ministers more attentive.

Not too much should be read into the short term of Clark. However, it certainly provides some necessary, if insufficient, evidence to support the view of Clark as a man with respect for the House. His attendance in the House ranks as high as the best sessions of St Laurent or Diefenbaker in this respect. However, since Clark was only in Parliament as Prime Minister for one session, the more interesting comparison is with the first sessions of the other prime ministers in our sample. On this count, we discover that Clark's overall level of activism is below the first sessions of St Laurent, Diefenbaker and Pearson and that of the first Trudeau government. Only in comparison with the later Trudeau and Mulroney does Clark look 'active' and this applies to his level of statement-making as much as to any other activity in the House.

Surveying the data on St Laurent, Pearson and Clark, there is only limited support for the first proposition. While all three exhibit moderate overall activism scores and are the three leading attenders, there is less consistency in either the number of statements they made or the percentage of divisions they attended. In fact, there is little in the data itself to distinguish these three prime ministers from the others with respect to statements and divisions. What is apparent, from a survey of the data in Table 1 and Figure 5, is the strong and consistent patterns of decline in parliamentary activism from 1949 to 1980. The profiles of these three prime ministers, with respect to statements, speeches and other interventions, flag the general decline in parliamentary activism over the time period. We will return to the theme of the overall decline in prime-ministerial activism below.

The Theorist

The combination of a predilection for structural reform, detached competence in the conduct of duties and personal disdain for adversaries is characteristic of the Lasswellian 'theorist'. In contradistinction to the argumentative agitator and the competent administrator, the theorist should show little interest in the House and attend as infrequently as possible. The only exception here might be in Question Period, where the theorist will enjoy imposing his logic on his opponents. In many respects, the profile of the theorist conforms to what has been written about Trudeau in the House. His reputation is strikingly different from any other of Canada's recent prime ministers. In the eyes of some, Trudeau acquired a reputation for being an excellent House of Commons man. Even Mulroney, a partisan adversary, once expressed great admiration for the work he conducted in the House.³⁹ McCall-Newman also commends Trudeau's reforms of the House, caucus and the structure of Cabinet, each of which acted to limit the powers of the Prime Minister and permitted Parliament to continue as a forum in which the opposition exerted their right to question and obstruct.⁴⁰ Other commentators have been more critical of Trudeau's attitude toward the Commons, in which he is said to have behaved in a gauche, confrontational and arrogant manner.⁴¹ Trudeau is said to have held the House in contempt and to have made use of it in an instrumental and cynical manner, mocking its constitutional status.⁴² As a consequence of his disdain for the House, Trudeau, according to Gwyn, made all his major speeches outside the House until the introduction of television in 1978.⁴³ An exploration of the data reveals that Trudeau's level of speech-making in the House after 1978 was not substantially different from his level before that date. Clearly, television in the House did nothing to increase the parliamentary activity of Trudeau. The apparent contradictions of Trudeau as structural reformer and as disdainful critic of Parliament are reconcilable in the person of the theorist: determined to enhance political life through rational reform, and yet frustrated by the inadequacies of those 'nobodies' on the back-benches who will not or cannot conform.⁴⁴

Trudeau's premiership spans three decades of change, and the profile of Trudeau across the years represents a gradual change in the Prime Minister's place in the House. When he took office in 1968, his activism in the first two sessions was comparable to Pearson's. This period lasted until the summer of 1970. For the remainder of his term in office, his attendance in the House became less frequent, never again to exceed the average of all post-war prime ministers. Radwanski expresses the conventional wisdom that in a chastened mood of humility between 1972 and 1974, in the minority government period, Trudeau kept a lower profile in the House.⁴⁵ In

terms of attendance, it has already been demonstrated that this notion is false. Trudeau attended the house somewhat more frequently in the minority years than in other sessions.

Leaving aside issues of style and effectiveness, the claim of McCall and Clarkson that Trudeau was 'a formidable debater in the House at Question Period'⁴⁶ is also open to question on empirical grounds. In terms of the quantity of his interventions in Question Period, he is outdistanced by Diefenbaker, Pearson and Clark, and the data support Pal's view that 'Trudeau was an uneven performer in the House'.⁴⁷ In a qualitative sense, however, Trudeau emerges as a pugnacious adversary in the House. More than simply responding to questions, Trudeau frequently badgered and taunted his adversaries with put-downs and barbs such as: 'Go ahead!' Many of Trudeau's interjections were in the imperative voice. Interestingly, while the early Mulroney equals Trudeau in terms of the number of interjections made in Question Period, his contributions were altogether different in their style. Rarely vicious or cutting, Mulroney tended to deflect rather than to court aggression through the use of a range of playful, flippant or sometimes dramatically 'aggrieved' comments.

As was noted above, Trudeau acquired a reputation for contempt of the House. If by contempt is meant lack of attendance or limited activism in the House then the critics have a point, but the real 'culprit' in this respect is surely Mulroney – and by a long way. (See Table 1 and Figure 5). If by contempt is meant a high degree of hostility toward his adversaries then they may also have a point. If what is meant is a failure to engage in debate of the issues of the day, however, then Trudeau can be exculpated. His profile displays above average participation in this respect, at least within Question Period. Moreover, Trudeau appears to have been an enthusiastic contributor. While Pearson's average number of interventions per Question Period is marginally higher than Trudeau's, ranging from 8.2 to 13.7 utterances per Question Period attended, many of Pearson's interventions were perfunctory. In seven out of nine of his sessions, from 1968 to 1979, Trudeau's average number of utterances per Question Period is in excess of nine. St Laurent and Mulroney each achieved this level in only one of their sessions and Diefenbaker never did. However, when it comes to his *overall* performance in the House, the pattern of Trudeau's engagement was one of continuous decline from 1970 to the administration of Clark in 1979. This is graphically evident in Figure 5 where, in striking contrast to those around him, Clark's 49 days are represented by an isolated bar which is barely negative, surrounded by a sea of *substantially* negative bars representing Trudeau and Mulroney's even lower levels of activism. The data on Trudeau's intervention in the House illustrate both his overall low and declining levels of activism and his relatively high engagement in Question

Period. These findings lend support to the profile of Trudeau as 'theorist' in our first proposition.

The literature on Mulroney's parliamentary career is sparse and there is insufficient material on which to make a judgement about his political personality. What can we learn from the data? Mulroney's overall activism in the House of Commons started low and declined throughout his term in office. In each category, Mulroney's scores are substantially lower than any other prime minister. In two of the categories – questions answered and statements made – the decline in the rate of intervention is dramatic from 1984 to 1993. Equally dramatic is the decline in the attendance of Mulroney in the House, in most sessions hovering in the 40 to 50 per cent range. The very low percentage of divisions attended by Mulroney is also notable. Clearly, Mulroney decided to conduct his politics elsewhere than the floor of the House of Commons.

It is possible to argue that Mulroney's low attendance in the House is a reflection of the increasing average length of parliamentary sessions. However, an estimate of the impact of this factor does not support this contention. It is possible to calculate the ratio of actual sitting days of the House to potential sitting days. For each prime minister, this is achieved by dividing the total number of sitting days in their term of office by the total number of *calendar* days in the same period. This calculation produces a coefficient for each prime minister. The higher the coefficient, the longer the average session during the term of the Prime Minister. The coefficients are: St Laurent – 0.36; Diefenbaker – 0.39; Pearson – 0.44; Trudeau – 0.45 and Mulroney – 0.46. Multiplying this coefficient by 365.25 provides the average number of days per year the House is in session. The average session length hardly changes at all from Pearson (161) to Mulroney (168). The thesis does not seem to be a plausible candidate for explaining the precipitous decline in prime-ministerial activism from Diefenbaker to Mulroney.

The decline in attendance in the House began, of course, with Trudeau and he too was a prime minister with little prior experience.⁴⁸ Although Mulroney continued the practice of interjections within Question Period, notably during his first session, where he scored quite high, he absented himself from debate in the House and, even more than Trudeau, was rarely in the House beyond Question Period. As his years in office continued, even his attendance in Question Period declined. Mulroney's perfunctory use of the parliamentary statement and his low attendance and voting records show him to lack the profile of an administrator. Mulroney's low attendance and low average interventions in Question Period suggest that he should not be classified as a theorist. If Mulroney was an agitator, his agitational work was conducted elsewhere and not in the House of Commons.

Indeed, an exploration of Mulroney's activism in the House provides few clues as to his political personality. However, his declining levels of activism continue the general trends, which are evident in Table 5, from the mid-1960s to 1993. These trends have little to do with political personality and reveal the limitations of the first proposition. Franks has claimed that the growing immediacy and pervasiveness of the mass media has resulted in prime ministers taking less part in debate in the House than in the past. In support of this he notes that both Trudeau and Mulroney have infrequent participation rates in debate.⁴⁹ There are other contenders for explanation. Most notable is the 'decline of parliament' thesis, which posits the manner in which governments and prime ministers in Westminster systems have become less accountable to parliaments and more responsive to bureaucracies, policy communities, regional interests, the global economy, the media, large corporations and other organisations. In the Canadian case, 'executive federalism' has been proffered as a rationale, with decisions about major policies and other initiatives increasingly becoming a matter for federal-provincial negotiations. While this paper can provide no definitive explanations to the factors underpinning the trends, a comparative analysis will be of some use.

BRITISH AND CANADIAN PRIME MINISTERS COMPARED

When comparing Canadian prime ministers with their counterparts in Britain there are some important structural differences that need to be taken into account. First, party traditions in each country have led to differences in the way leaders are perceived and selected, and have produced distinctive leadership profiles as a consequence. Compared to British party leaders, very few Canadian leaders have been House of Commons men.⁵⁰ Since the introduction of the party convention method of selecting a leader in 1917 in Canada, there have been 15 leadership conventions for the Liberal Party and Progressive Conservative Party combined. Only in four cases out of 15 has the candidate with the most parliamentary experience won the convention. This is indicative of the relatively short average experience in the House of Commons possessed by party leaders and incoming prime ministers, and it contrasts sharply with the British experience in which a virtual *sine qua non* of elevation to leadership is lengthy and substantial experience in the House of Commons.⁵¹ Moreover, ordinary Members of Parliament in Canada have relatively short careers in the House.⁵² Additionally, the greater geographical dispersion of Canadian Members of Parliament renders them relatively more parochial in their outlook than their British counterparts.⁵³ Thus, an incoming prime minister will often have to 'learn the ropes', and this might be the cause for a degree of caution, even apprehension. However, once in

office, Canadian prime ministers have tended to outlast their British counterparts. Indeed, once entrenched in office, the Prime Minister's great prestige and power have served him well in the daily battle of wit and invective in Question Period and most neophyte back-benchers are reluctant to take on the great leader. We might, therefore, anticipate a propensity for Canadian prime ministers to accept readily the burden of the defence of the Government in the House, notably once they have grown accustomed to the House, and an equal propensity for British prime ministers to avoid the fray and to leave the defence of the Government to other senior Ministers. This idea is summarised in Franks' explanation of the contrasting structures characteristic of the Canadian and British experience:⁵⁴

In Canada a strong, solidly entrenched prime minister faces an insecure and transient House of Commons; in Britain an insecure and transient prime minister faces a strong and solidly entrenched House. Power is more centralized within the political executive, particularly the prime minister, in Canada than in Britain ... The British House of Commons is a far more independent-minded and -acting body than the Canadian House.

On the other hand, we should not exaggerate this tendency and assume that *every* Canadian Prime Minister is willing and able to savage the innocents on the Opposition back-benches or that all MPs are mere lobby fodder.⁵⁵ There are very real risks attached to regular performance in Question Period and a major failure in the House has the potential to reverberate through the mass media to the attention of the general public. Certain commentators have been aware of the risks associated with the Prime Minister's role in Parliament. Punnett refers to parliamentary appearances as 'a real ordeal for at least some Prime Ministers'.⁵⁶

Irrespective of the notion that Canadian prime ministers are more solidly entrenched, the constitutional and institutional environment of responsible government and Westminster-style representation underpins political life both in Britain and Canada. An empirical profile of the comparative levels of activism of prime ministers in the two houses will identify the extent to which the common governmental characteristics are operative. Our second proposition will be supported to the extent that the patterns are common to both national experiences. However, it is arguable that a more profound comparative issue is the *contrast* between Canada as a federal system and Britain as a unitary system of government. Irrespective of the traditions of responsible government or the party system, Canadian prime ministers are said to have been more likely to spend longer periods away from the House dealing with provincial premiers and making important policy speeches in places other than the House of Commons.

There are some minor differences between ourselves and Dunleavy and his colleagues in the way in which the data have been classified. In addition, some of the major differences between the British and Canadian findings are the result of different procedures in the two Houses, the most obvious being the rules governing Question Period in Canada and Question Time in Britain. As Dyck points out, Canadian prime ministers are expected to be in attendance for oral questions virtually every day, while British prime ministers, since 1961, have only appeared twice a week.⁵⁷ British Question Time is a tightly organised and highly choreographed affair, in which questions are submitted in writing to the Prime Minister well in advance of the two 15-minute prime-ministerial appearances each week. Despite this, British prime ministers routinely face 'engagements' questions in which there is little substance and which facilitate a broad range of supplementaries.⁵⁸ In Canada, the Prime Minister may well be in attendance *each* day of the week for the entire Question Period. While the British Speaker exerts tight control over the flow of questions and the order of supplementaries, the Canadian Speaker is more willing to allow debate to take its natural course.⁵⁹ It is not unusual for the Canadian Prime Minister to contribute between 30 and 50 separate utterances to a single Question Period, many of them impromptu and off-hand. The higher rate of attendance and participation of Canada's prime ministers is then, to some extent, a consequence of matters of routine and practice. Interestingly, despite the practice of other post-war prime ministers in Canada, Mulroney's attendance record places him closer to the *British* pattern of two appearances per week than to the averages of his immediate predecessors.

The British data on prime-ministerial interventions indicate that the adjusted levels of statements made to the House have fluctuated between six and ten per session on a regular basis since 1940.⁶⁰ The Canadian data exceed these levels in the 1950s and most of the 1960s, but come to approximate to these levels with the administration of Trudeau. It is worth noting that, while Thatcher and Major continued to make five to six statements per session, Mulroney dropped to less than one. This finding reflects the continued importance of the House as a place of political record in Britain and its diminution in this respect in Canada.

There has been a sharp decline in the number of speeches made by British prime ministers since the Second World War, declining from about eight per session to about three or four per session.⁶¹ This decline parallels the decline in Canada, but is lower in amplitude by a factor of about three. Current levels of speech-making in the Canadian House, low as they are, correspond to the post-war levels achieved in Britain.

Overall prime-ministerial activism in Britain has declined in the post-war period, including intervention in debates. Over the entire post-war

period, the levels of these other interventions in Canada are about the same as in Britain. In Britain and Canada levels of 20 to 35 were common in the 1950s and 1960s, but by the 1980s such interventions had virtually disappeared. Callaghan hardly ever intervened in debate and after 1984 Thatcher never did. Neither did the later Trudeau, Clark or Mulroney.

Question Period continues to be a necessity for British prime ministers, and the participation rates continue to be stable, even though since 1961 – in distinct contrast to Canada – it has become more formalised and briefer. Irrespective of this fact, the Canadian Prime Minister answers questions much more often than his British counterpart. The post-war average score in Britain is about 50 per session; in Canada, it ranges from a high of 137 to a low of 69 in the case of Mulroney (see Table 1). There would appear to be a close correlation between Mulroney's attendance in the House and his levels of answering questions, and in both respects he approximates to the British pattern.

In sum, then, a brief glance at the standardised British profile since 1940, represented in Figure 6,⁶² reveals strong similarities to the Canadian picture in Figure 5. What is most striking is the fact that, since the early 1970s the story in both countries has been the same: the rapid and growing abandonment of the House of Commons by a succession of prime ministers who are now increasingly engaged in the planning and conduct of their nation's business in other forums, and who are now communicating through channels other than the House and the parliamentary party.

The principal contrast manifest in the data presented is between the relatively high attendance and participation levels of Canadian prime ministers in comparison with their British counterparts. Canadian prime ministers continue, at least until Mulroney, to outscore their British counterparts, even if the temporal declines in activism are very close to each other in terms of the overall trend. The continually higher levels of activism of Canada's prime ministers throughout most of the period lend support to the idea that Canada's leaders are more comfortable in the House of Commons. On the other hand, if the amplitude is ignored the closeness of the trend lines in each country suggest that there are indeed underlying commonalities between the roles of prime ministers in their respective Parliaments. Figures 5 and 6 reveal profiles that are strikingly similar. While a definitive conclusion would be unwise, the patterns are so close that an explanation for the Canadian patterns grounded in executive-federalism is not persuasive. Rather, our data and those of Dunleavy and his colleagues sustain the 'decline of parliament' thesis. Thus, our second proposition, pointing to the similarities in trends in prime-ministerial activism between Canada and Britain, is supported, while the third proposition, stressing substantial differences between the two, is rejected.

FIGURE 6
BRITISH PMs - OVERALL ACTIVISM

CONCLUSION

Our survey of the patterns of parliamentary participation of Canada's six sitting prime ministers, from St Laurent to Mulroney, has facilitated a preliminary test of a number of conjectures about the presence of the Prime Minister in the House of Commons. There have been some ready confirmations: Diefenbaker emerges in the data as an agitator and, for the most part, St Laurent and Pearson come across as relatively quiescent administrators, even if their empirical profiles do not quite fit the anticipated patterns. In his very brief term, Clark's presence in the House was stalwart. Trudeau fits the profile of the theorist. These characteristics provide substantial support for our first proposition. However, the data contain some unexpected characteristics, and we are beginning to explore the implications of these: St Laurent and, to a lesser extent, Pearson were, contrary to some interpretations, relatively busy speech-makers, while Trudeau and Mulroney made relatively few speeches; the use of Parliament for making statements also seems to be in steady decline throughout the period. Despite their willingness to enter the fray of partisan exchange in Question Period, Trudeau, Clark and Mulroney all but abandoned the Lower

Chamber. Particularly prominent is the overall decline in prime-ministerial activism from Diefenbaker to Mulroney. Mulroney's activism was so low in each respect that he resisted classification in terms of his political personality in the House. Consequently, our analysis moved to a consideration of broader, structural and systemic matters. The decline in Canadian prime-ministerial activism closely parallels the pattern of decline in Britain, suggesting that there are underlying factors in common between the two polities, despite their clear constitutional and political differences. Our next round of research will take us further into this comparative context.

In time, we will have assembled the data for the entire period of existence of the Canadian House of Commons. We will then be in a position to extend the two types of comparative analysis undertaken above: among Canadian prime ministers from 1867 to the present, largely in terms of their manifest political personalities, and across the Canadian and British parliamentary systems. Such comparisons will continue to be driven by the data and bring to the bar of empirical enquiry qualitative and subjective pronouncements on the activities of Canadian prime ministers in Parliament.

APPENDIX

Making decisions about the classification of prime ministerial utterances into discrete categories entails many judgement calls. The following specifications have informed the classification process and establish the principal criteria employed. It should be noted that the analysis in this paper is largely based upon counting only the *first* occurrence of a type of intervention on any particular sitting day. Thus, from the perspective of the paper and unless otherwise stated, it does not matter whether the Prime Minister makes one speech or five speeches. However, our data bank includes a record of *every* distinct occurrence of each type of intervention. Thus, if the Prime Minister is active on a particular day, he might score 35 or even 60 in the 'questions' category. In subsequent papers we will be able to explore more fully the levels of intensity in which individual prime ministers conducted different types of intervention. Even though the present paper does not depend upon an analysis of intensity levels, the complexities of multiple coding are discussed below.

1. Questions

Since 1949, *Hansard* has evolved in its reporting of formal Question Period. In general, the passage of years have seen Question Period become more and more structured. Notably in the early years, questions might be put to the Prime Minister following a statement, a 'Question of Privilege', 'Reference to Remarks', 'Requests' for something and in response to 'tabling'. In order for utterances by prime ministers to be counted as 'questions' during such periods of 'Business of the House', there must clearly be a formal exchange in the interrogative. Other comments made by the Prime Minister at these times are coded as 'other interventions' (see 4 below). The best guide to the demarcation of Question Period in the St Laurent and Diefenbaker period are the words: 'On the Order of the Day' or 'Inquiries of the Ministry'. Later Question Periods are simply labelled as such. Each utterance by a prime minister in Question Period counts as a potential 'question' for coding purposes. The utterance can be a response to a question, a

response to a supplementary, a comment made on some other matter or an interjection. Hansard indicates interrupted and continued utterances by a series of dashes. Interruptions to the flow of the Prime Minister are ignored and each interrupted question counts as one unit, even if there are six or seven fragments. Only *oral* responses to questions count as 'questions'. Written responses are coded into a separate category. The Prime Minister occasionally responds orally to a written question. Such a response is coded as a question. Utterances are recorded as questions irrespective of their length. On very rare occasions, however, a response to a question turns into a speech. On these occasions, questions have been recorded as speeches (see 3 below). Questions posed to the Prime Minister or questions asked by him outside of question period, notably in debate, are *not* coded as 'questions', but as 'other interventions'.

2. Statements

Statements are formal announcements by prime ministers of matters of general importance, notably those related to government business, reports of government actions or the intentions of the government. Statements are often indicated by the term: 'announcement'. Included in statements are: announcements of by-elections; announcements of the presence in the House of distinguished visitors; the government's priorities in the legislative agenda; announcements of appointments, resignations and transfers; reports of conferences attended; statements of positions adopted on certain matters by the government and announcements of tomorrow's business in the House. A very lengthy statement, which evolves into a discourse of some kind, is coded *both* as a statement and as a speech. Such occurrences are very rare. Also very rare are statements which evolve into responses to questions with words such as: 'I should like to complete an answer.' If appropriate, these statements are also coded as questions.

3. Speeches

Speeches are normally lengthy interventions made in the House by the Prime Minister outside Question Period. Speeches also include shorter expressions of congratulations, regret, commiseration, condolences, birthday greetings, personal losses, obituaries and other such remarks. The speeches of prime ministers in debate are often interrupted by cries, witticisms and other utterances. These are ignored for purposes of counting. Only when the Prime Minister has actually completed his speech and there is a substantial contribution by another member can further utterances by the Prime Minister be counted as 'other interventions'. *Hansard* assists us by indicating at the top or bottom of the page, for most of the time period, when the Prime Minister is continuing his speech. On occasion, such as an address to the House by a foreign Head of State, the speech of the Prime Minister made to the House, is reported in an Appendix. On these occasions, the speech is counted. If the text of a speech by the Prime Minister made *elsewhere* than the House is recorded in the Appendix, it is not counted.

4. Other Interventions

A majority of those utterances coded as other interventions occur in debate. However, some occur during other House business outside Question Period. Examples of this residual category are: questions and responses to questions in debate; occasional asides, comments, clarifications, interjections, elaborations and exchanges. The category also includes responses to 'Motions for Papers'.

NOTES

1. John Turner served as Prime Minister in 1984 from 30 June to 17 September, but there were no sittings of the House of Commons during that period.
2. H. Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1951). Lasswell's work is a synthetic and imaginative *tour de force* which, while based upon the psychosexual theories of Freud, integrates insights from: the classical sociologists, Simmel, Michels and Weber; the post-Freudians, Jung and Adler; psychologists such as Floyd Allport and early political scientists, including Merriam and Wallas. Given the brilliant, speculative and

uneven range of his thought, Lasswell's ideas are better employed as inspirational sources than as inflexible theoretical starting points.

3. Lasswell, *Psychopathology*, pp.78-9, 112-13, 125-6.
4. Lasswell, *Psychopathology*, pp.151-2.
5. Lasswell, *Psychopathology*, pp.53-4.
6. P. Dunleavy, G.W. Jones and B. O'Leary, 'Prime Ministers and the Commons: Patterns of Behaviour, 1868 to 1987', *Public Administration*, 68 (1990), 123-40; P. Dunleavy and G.W. Jones, with J. Burnham, R. Elgie and P. Fysh, 'Leaders, Politics and Institutional Change: The Decline of Prime Ministerial Accountability to the House of Commons, 1868-1990', *British Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1993), 267-98; J. Burnham and G.W. Jones, with R. Elgie, 'The Parliamentary Activity of John Major, 1990-94', *British Journal of Political Science*, 25 (1995), 551-72.
7. Burnham *et al.* raise the question of the extent to which the parliamentary activity of Ministers other than the Prime Minister have grown to compensate for the declining accountability of the Prime Minister in Parliament. While we do not have the data to explore these matters in the Canadian context, the question is intriguing. Burnham *et al.*, 'The Parliamentary Activity of John Major', p.562.
8. The increasing importance of First Ministers Conferences as a forum for decision-making is discussed in D.C. Wallace, 'Friends and Foes: Prime Ministers and Premiers in Intergovernmental Relations', in L.A. Pal and D. Taras (eds.), *Prime Ministers and Premiers: Political Leadership and Public Policy in Canada* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall, 1988), Ch.6.
9. K. Archer, R. Gibbins, R. Knopff and L. Pal, *Parameters of Power* (Toronto: Nelson, 1995), p.39; M. Whittington and R. van Loon, *Canadian Government and Politics* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1996), p.265; G. Stevenson, 'Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations', in M. Whittington and G. Williams (eds.), *Canadian Politics in the 1990s* (Toronto: Nelson, 1995), pp.419-21.
10. Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Prime Ministers and the Commons'; Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Leaders, Politics and Institutional Change'.
11. Three very short sessions of five, 11 and 17 days have been excluded from the study. They are simply too short to allow for the degree of variation necessary to be truly comparable. Excluded sessions are: 21.3, 1950-51; 22.4, 1956-57 and 34.1, 1988.
12. Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Leaders, Politics and Institutional Change', pp.297, 298.
13. Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Leaders, Politics and Institutional Change', p.287.
14. The formula is: $z = \bar{x} - x/s$.
15. J. Chrétien, *Straight From the Heart* (Toronto: Seal, 1986), p.29.
16. Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Leaders, Politics and Institutional Change', p.290.
17. W.F. Dawson, *Procedure in the Canadian House of Commons* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); R.M. Dawson, *The Government of Canada* (4th edn. revised N. Ward) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968); T. Hockin, 'The Prime Minister and Political Leadership: An Introduction to Some Restraints and Imperatives'; D. Smith, 'President and Parliament: The Transformation of Parliamentary Government in Canada'; and Joseph Wearing, 'President or Prime Minister', each in T. Hockin (ed.), *Apex of Power: The Prime Minister and Political Leadership in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp.2-21, 224-41 and 242-60 respectively; W. Matheson, *The Prime Minister and the Cabinet* (Toronto: Methuen, 1976); M. Punnett, *The Prime Minister in Canadian Government and Politics* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977); W. Young, 'Leadership and Canadian Politics', in J.H. Redekop (ed.), *Approaches to Canadian Politics* (Scarborough, Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp.282-301; C.E.S. Franks, *The Parliament of Canada* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1987); and I. Stewart, 'Scaling the Matterhorn: Parliamentary Leadership in Canada', in M. Mancuso, R.G. Price and R. Wagenberg (eds.), *Leaders and Leadership in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.154-73.
18. R.C. Brown, 'Fishwives, Plutocrats, Sirens and Other Curious Creatures: Some Questions About Political Leadership in Canada', in L. Pal and D. Taras (eds.), *Prime Ministers and Premiers: Political Leadership and Public Policy in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1988), p.27.

19. M. Ondaatje, *The Prime Ministers of Canada, 1867-1967* (Toronto: Miller, 1967), p.139; M. Bliss, *Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Mulroney* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1994), pp.187-8; G. Donaldson, *Fifteen Men: Canada's Prime Ministers from Macdonald to Trudeau* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1969), p.189; and L. Pal, 'Hands at the Helm? Leadership and Public Policy', in L.A. Pal and D. Taras (eds.), *Prime Ministers and Premiers*, p.23.
20. P.C. Newman, *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p.87.
21. 'Attendance' is defined by the proportion of all possible sitting days per session on which the Prime Minister left at least one recorded trace of his presence in the House. Included in 'attendance' are days where the Prime Minister just voted, but days on which the Prime Minister submitted only a written answer to a question are omitted.
22. Smith, 'President and Parliament', p.231.
23. Pearson, referring to St Laurent in the House, called him 'the least arrogant of men'. L.B. Pearson, *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson*, Vol.3: 1957-1968 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p.13; B. Hutchison, *Mr. Prime Minister, 1867-1964* (Toronto: Longmans: 1964), p.289, makes reference to St Laurent's parsimony in the House.
24. Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, p.182; Donaldson, *Fifteen Men*, pp.178-9; and Hutchison, *Mr. Prime Minister*, pp.304-5.
25. R. Dyck, *Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches* (Scarborough: Nelson, 1993), p.418; and Punnett, *The Prime Minister*, p.28. Pearson himself was generous in his praise of Diefenbaker's abilities in the House. R. Gwyn, *The Shape of Scandal* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited, 1965), p.67. Chrétien has made similar points. J. Chrétien, *Straight From the Heart*, p.21.
26. Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, p.222.
27. T. Kent, *A Public Purpose: An Experience of Liberal Opposition and Canadian Government* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p.214; Punnett, *The Prime Minister*, p.28.
28. J. La Marsh, *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), p.62.
29. Pearson, *Memoirs*, Vol.2, p.12.
30. Hutchison, *Mr. Prime Minister*, p.359.
31. W. Troyer, *200 Days: Joe Clark in Power* (Toronto: Personal Publishers, 1980); J. Simpson, *Discipline of Power: The Conservative Interlude and the Liberal Restoration* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1984).
32. J. Sawatsky, *Mulroney: The Politics of Ambition* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), p.337.
33. Lasswell, *Psychopathology*, p.127.
34. Having been accused of the betrayal of the United Kingdom in the Suez crisis, St Laurent, who was clearly offended, referred to the British as 'supermen', thereby associating by guilt the regime in Britain with the philosophy of *übermensch* characteristic of the Nazi regime in Germany. Hutchison, *Mr. Prime Minister*, p.309.
35. R. Gwyn, *The Northern Magus* (Markham: Paperjacks, 1980), p.90.
36. Recent evidence on the impact of television on British Question Time is inconclusive and it appears to have had only a limited impact on the deportment of the Prime Minister and almost no effect on his or her rate of attendance. R.L. Borthwick, 'On the Floor of the House', in M. Franklin and P. Norton (eds.), *Parliamentary Questions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp.97-8.
37. We thank Louis Massicotte and Garth Stevenson (personal communications) for suggesting this line of enquiry.
38. G. Radwanski, *Trudeau* (Scarborough: Signet, 1978), p.251.
39. Mulroney quoted in L.I. MacDonald, *Mulroney: The Making of the Prime Minister* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), p.249.
40. C. McCall-Newman, *Grits: An Intimate Portrait of the Liberal Party* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), pp.345-6.

41. W. Stewart, *Shrug: Trudeau in Power* (Toronto: New Press, 1971) pp.145-60; Punnett, *The Prime Minister*, p.5.
42. R. Gwyn, *The Northern Magus*, p.58. Trudeau himself is quoted on the Commons in G. Radwanski, *Trudeau*, p.219, where he states that he finds the yelling to be 'vulgar' and says that it 'offends' him. The idea that Trudeau's characteristically disdainful response to the House was to become crude and contemptuous is largely founded on two particular incidents. The first, in 1969, came in response to an opposition filibuster over Trudeau's reforms of the House. In an angry tirade, Trudeau referred to members of the opposition as 'just nobodies'. (*Hansard* 28-1 Vol. 10, 24 July 1969). In a second incident, Trudeau mouthed to opposition members the words 'fuck off'. When asked to repeat what he had mouthed, Trudeau said 'fuddle-duddle'. Stewart, *Shrug*, p.147 makes reference to this incident. We thank one of our anonymous reviewers for reminding us about the booming trade in 'fuddle-duddle' T-shirts which followed from this incident in the House!
43. Gwyn, *The Northern Magus*, p.90.
44. The reference to 'nobodies' comes from an interchange in Question Period on 24 July 1969, cited earlier, note 42.
45. Radwanski, *Trudeau*, p.251.
46. C. McCall and S. Clarkson, *Trudeau and Our Times*, Vol.2. (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1994), p.323.
47. L. Pal, 'Hands at the Helm? Leadership and Public Policy', in L.A. Pal and D. Taras (eds.), *Prime Ministers and Premiers*, p.23.
48. In a stinging and barely concealed attack on Mulroney at the Progressive Conservative leadership convention of 1976, an old and irascible Diefenbaker delivered a rousing opening address to the convention in which he repeatedly stated that Trudeau's inadequacies as a Prime Minister were caused by his lack of parliamentary experience prior to becoming leader. These comments were clearly designed to undermine the position of Brian Mulroney, who had no parliamentary experience in 1976. Sawatsky, *Mulroney*, pp.294-5.
49. Franks, *The Parliament of Canada*, p.157.
50. Punnett, *The Prime Minister*, p.15.
51. Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Prime Ministers and the Commons', p.123.
52. Franks, *The Parliament of Canada*, p.23.
53. Dawson, *Procedure in the Canadian House of Commons*, p.13.
54. Franks, *The Parliament of Canada*, p.24.
55. Hockin, 'The Prime Minister and Political Leadership', pp.7-8, and Franks, *The Parliament of Canada*, p.156.
56. Punnett, *The Prime Minister*, p.117.
57. Dyck, *Canadian Politics*, p.418.
58. H. Irwin, A. Kennon, D. Natzler and R. Rogers, 'Evolving Rules', in Franklin and Norton (eds.), *Parliamentary Questions*, pp.55-8. Irwin *et al.* (p.56) make the interesting point that the British 1972 Select Committee on Parliamentary Questions specifically *rejected* a proposal to adopt the Canadian system of questions without notice.
59. Borthwick points out (p.90) that the Speaker will rule out certain supplementaries if they appear to be entirely irrelevant to the original 'engagements' question. Borthwick 'On the Floor of the House' in Franklin and Norton (eds.), *Parliamentary Questions*, pp.73-103.
60. Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Leaders, Politics and Institutional Change', p.279.
61. Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Leaders, Politics and Institutional Change', p.284.
62. Figure adapted from Dunleavy *et al.*, 'Leaders, Politics and Institutional Change', p.289. While the Canadian figures are marked by the first sessions of each Prime Minister, we have followed the British model in Figure 6, employing selected years to mark the succession of post-war sessions.