It is a pleasure to be with you today. The invitation to come to Queen’s arrived in the week that the Globe and Mail’s special supplement on Canadian Universities gave Queen’s the gold medal. So here I am lunching with champions!

I want to use the few minutes I have with you 

    to tell you something about IDRC, 
    to highlight why it was a very different beast in public administration terms, 
    and to fit the developing world into your world (your career horizon) as Canadian public administrators.

And I want to make sure we have some time for a conversation.

About IDRC—the Pearsonian vision

One of the IDRC’s founding Governors, Rex Nettleford of Jamaica, observed at its inception that it is “a revolutionary, if strange institution”.

Why revolutionary? IDRC was revolutionary in that it turned development back to people in developing countries, providing support to the local scientists dedicated to finding solutions to problems which plagued poor countries as they emerged from colonialism.

Why strange? Because IDRC was a public corporation governed by a Board with 10 of its 21 members being non-Canadian (six of whom must be nationals of developing countries), empowered to spend Canadian taxpayers dollars and not subject to the Government of Canada Financial Administration Act.
Lester B. (Mike) Pearson was Prime Minister of Canada from 1963 to 1968 after service in the 1914-1918 war, and 30 years as a public servant including ten years as under secretary (DM) of Foreign Affairs. After he left government, he chaired a Commission of Enquiry and Reflection at the World Bank. The Pearson Commission’s 1969 report on international development (*Partners in Development*) became the world’s way of acknowledging that the well trodden path of thought about “development” – political independence, foreign aid, industrialization – did not solve the problems of underdevelopment. A new approach that encouraged and supported indigenous research was called for. IDRC was created to do just that. It is part of Lester B. Pearson’s legacy – quite a benchmark in the legacy stakes!

As students of public administration I urge you to have a look at the Centre’s Act where ‘revolutionary and strange’ are made operational to enable the Centre to initiate, encourage, support and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions. The Act, which provides the flexibility to support mostly developing country researchers, but not ruling out support to Canadians, is still appropriate. So is its governance: As a Crown corporation, it is one of the few that gives significant power to the governing Board, appointed by Order in Council, over the President, the CEO. In effect, it selects him or her and then recommends that person to Cabinet. And that is why I have two bosses!

Perhaps we can return to this important issue of governance during question time.

**Social Innovation**

At the outset, IDRC was heavily engaged in applied natural sciences (in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, medicine and informatics). Over the years, other organizations, often stimulated by us, have taken on or been created to do the research for public goods based on science and technology. A good example are the centres under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in agriculture and forestry, and the World Health Organization in health.

About a decade ago, IDRC recognized that while there was a measurable and steady supply of scientific and technological innovations, much more crucial was the inability in many parts of the world to actually use them. There was a critical lack of ‘social innovations’, those innovations that shape the institutions and practices that we sum up as ‘society and culture’. These accumulate so slowly that we are largely unconscious of their being ‘there’ at all. In the past two years, the U of T’s Thomas Homer-Dixon with his book *The Ingenuity Gap*, has done us great service by underscoring how critical social ingenuity (innovation by another name) is to our very survival.

The creation of a ‘revolutionary and strange’ IDRC was in retrospect a wonderful example of a Canadian social innovation – redolent in ingenuity – a departure from the quotidian (pro forma)
Why this might be of interest to you

When David (Elder) asked me to speak to you I wanted to know more about you – what you wanted to listen to (in addition to the IDRC commercial) that would reward the time you can spare for this session (I am aware that this is lunch time – and I would not want to ruin your digestion!).

David said that you are ‘fundamentally committed to the concept that good public policy improves the state of the country and the state of the world.’

I share that conviction and believe that few areas of human endeavour need social innovation more than the pursuit of public goods and the public administration that creates and distributes them. Your focus is on national public goods: mine (IDRC’s) is on global public goods. You do not need me to point out that we now live, and you will work, in a world where the local (national) is global. That was one of the key insights in the 1995 Government statement on Foreign Policy, ‘Canada in the World’, which observed ‘Domestic Policy is foreign policy. Foreign policy is domestic policy’. But I do want to encourage you to appreciate that ‘global’ must include the developing regions of the world and the problems and challenges that face four fifths of the world’s population – living in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Public policy is about social innovation.

I want to draw your attention to research that I think goes beyond the observation that the ‘local is global’ to suggest the kind of tangible social innovations that will be needed to achieve a public administration for a sustainable future for all.

Dr. Inge Kaul¹ and her colleagues at the UNDP are challenging some of the fundamentals of public administration by offering prescient views of how this new ‘global context’ will affect the machinery of government. Kaul’s work underscores the fact that the production and distribution of ‘global public goods’ overlaps and is increasingly co-terminous with the production and distribution of national public goods observing that: “We have entered a new era of public policy, defined by a growing number of concerns that straddle national borders ... it poses dual challenges ... the need to transform international cooperation from its traditional place as ‘external affairs’ into policy-making applicable to most, if not all, domestic areas ... to develop the concepts and instruments needed to overcome problems of collective action.”

To deal with this globalized world, Kaul and her co-researchers assert that: “International cooperation must form an integral part of national public policy making ... international cooperation starts ‘at home’... A policy of internalizing externalities may also require that national government ministries develop a clear mandate for international cooperation ... it would be useful for ministries to have a two track budget ... one for domestic expenditures and one to finance international cooperation.”

**Getting there from here – Public Administration matters**

As a research-supporting organization, at IDRC, we keep one eye on the Canadian research landscape and we have been struck by how rapidly this is responding to the increased recognition that research that is good for Canada will be increasingly international in its scope and conduct.

There are shifts in the Canadian research landscape that suggest Kaul is on to something and which, I suggest, will have an impact on conceptualization and delivery of national public administration.

Factors driving this changes include:

- shifts in the nature of international cooperation;
  
  I have mentioned Kaul’s work in this regard.

- Canadian foreign policy;
  
  I have mentioned the observation from Canada in the World that ‘Domestic policy is foreign policy...foreign policy is domestic policy.’

- Canadian political leadership,
  
  In the Speech from the Throne in January 2001, the Government shared the vision of ‘a global strategy for Canadian science and technology with Canada at the forefront of collaborative international research which expands the frontiers of knowledge’ with the goal of advancing Canada from 15th to 5th place in the international R&D league table
  
  More recently we have the push on the Innovation Agenda.

- the national S&T agenda;
  
had received a number of briefs to the effect that ‘in the current globalized system, the focus on domestic needs is too limiting’ and that participants in its regional workshops had commented on the lack of discussion of the development of S and T capacity in developing countries. Disappointingly, Simard considered an analysis of these issues was beyond its competence and the scope of its mandate and that it would involve an in-depth review of the federal S and T strategy. We await the next round.

– intellectual and inter-generational changes on the university campus;

Faculty play a critical role in international programs for students and in the international activity of the university overall. The faculty who have developed these programs are retiring in large numbers – 30,000 professors over the next ten years. Jim Shute at Guelph forecasts a weakening of interests and capacity for offering these programs as younger faculty are hired. He believes that young faculty avoid involvement in research for development (work with the developing regions generally) because it slows career advancement, especially tenure.

– policy changes in the Granting Councils;

Both the SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) and the CIHR (Canadian Institutes for Health Research) have introduced policy changes to permit foreign researcher collaborating with Canadians to receive direct funding.

One project that illustrates the potential that this change in rules releases.

SSHRC has provided $2.5 for a major international research project ‘to examine globalization and autonomy.’ The project will network 12 Canadian universities and 16 ‘foreign institutions’ to make the research findings relevant internationally.

The project will help guide policy makers dealing with questions such as:

Do the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the G-8 or G-20 summits destabilize national governments by shifting policy making to international level?

Does globalization marginalise developing countries?

Is globalization reducing cultural diversity?

Is globalization increasing the possibilities for creating high technology industries in developing countries?
Do international human rights agreements help marginalised groups?

“Who would have thought ten years ago that a small Canadian business or a Mexican peasant would require knowledge of NAFTA trading rules or WTO subsidy definitions to earn a living,” said Dr. Coleman. “We are living in an increasingly complex global village, and our research findings will help Canadians negotiate the challenges ahead.”

- response to new visions for international development being offered by major thinkers.

We will endeavour to put researchers in touch with developing-country researchers who have already written on these questions. There is growing recognition of the critical need for research to solve problems that undermine the well-being of the majority of the people in the world and the realization that in many fields this research can only be done through international collaboration. Writing in The Economist, Jeffrey Sachs observed ‘... that participation in international assistance needs to be broadened and recast ... and first-world universities and scientific establishments need to be engaged, and the official agencies charged with global development ...’ Jeffrey Sachs, A new map of the world, The economist. June 24, 2000.

See also the World Health Organizations, report Genomics and World Health which calls for funds to ensure that ‘Genome research ... changes the world for all health care. ... in particular ... ‘to enable developing countries to leapfrog decades of medical development and bring their citizens greatly improved care and modern methods in the much more immediate future.’ Gro Harlem Bruntland.

- As well, the Centre for International Governance Innovation (a private public partnership)

This new centre is supported by a $60 million endowment with $30 million from Jim Balsillie, CEO of Research in Motion, matched by $30 million from the Government of Canada (Department of Finance). It will be guided by an international board that includes the best political economists it can attract from both the developed and developing world with the goal ‘to analyse the global economy, make national and international policy recommendations and predict (manage) future economic trends’.

And, perhaps most telling of all for those of you preparing to enter or return to Canada’s public service:

- in recent days the Privy Council Office has commissioned a task force to seek views on the key challenges over the next ten years and the impact on developing countries. PCO signals that it is aware that more and more departments are
involved or want to be involved in cooperation activities with developing countries and poses the questions: What is the role of aid agencies versus other government departments?; How should funding be managed?; Are there implications for the machinery of government?

The Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD), through its Partnerships for International Cooperation secretariat, is playing a major role in coordinating the Government of Canada response to the many requests for access to the skills and knowledge embodied in Canada’s public service.

I suggest that all of these factors are intertwined with the core concerns for Canadian public administrators – ensuring that Canadians do well in a challenging world.

Perhaps, as we move into discussion, let us consider the following proposition:

As contemporary specialists in national public administrators you are at the same time specialists in global development.

What does that mean? And why? And what would you do differently?