

And if in the solution of these problems our interests may come into conflict, both countries are so accustomed to the democratic processes of discussion and compromise and of living in accordance with the rule of law that I have no doubt but that they will ultimately be settled — and satisfactorily settled.

Defence

May I now turn to the sphere of activity, where co-operation between Canada and the United States has been most complete, most effective and most cordial — the field for which in Canada I am primarily responsible — the field of North American defence.

The close co-operation for mutual protection which has been maintained in recent years between our respective departments of defence is all the more remarkable in the light of history. A century and a half ago we were at war with you. Ninety years ago, fear of the United States was one of the most compelling factors leading to the federal union of our provinces into one Canadian nation.

Yet from 1867 to this day we have lived in friendship and peace with never a real reason for either country to consider the possibility of defending itself against its neighbor.

Nor, in fact, had we in the past much to fear from other foreign powers. The great oceans formed a barrier to invasion, and powerful navies protected our coasts.

It is only in recent years that close co-operation between our two countries in matters of defence was established. In fact, not until 1938 when Hitler was so ominously rattling his sabre. At that time, President Roosevelt gave public assurance that the United States would not stand idly by in the event of threatened domination of Canadian soil. Canada's Prime Minister Mackenzie King immediately reciprocated by announcing Canada's obligation when he declared that:

Should the occasion ever arise, enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way either by land, sea or air to the United States across Canadian territory.

Thus was notice served to the world by both Canada and the United States that henceforth both countries were committed to a system of mutual self-defence.

Early in the last world war, during the dark days of 1940 when the Germans overran northwestern Europe and the future of the whole free world fell into jeopardy, the policy of joint Canada-United States defence came to fruition. Prime Minister King and President Roosevelt agreed at Ogdensburg, New York, to set up a Permanent Joint Board on Defence.