

was threatened by any other empire. To this declaration I replied at Woodbridge, Ontario, two days later, that we too had our obligations as a good-friendly neighbour.

Our common problems of defence were discussed at length and in a more concrete and definite way when I visited Washington in November, 1938, to sign the new Canadian-United States trade agreement.

In the summer of 1939, the president paid a visit to Canadian waters off the Atlantic coast. He subsequently told me that this visit, like his similar visit to Victoria two years earlier, had been occasioned by his concern with the problem of coastal defence.

With the outbreak of war, the question of coast defences became of vital importance. At the same time, the fact that Canada was a belligerent and the United States a neutral complicated the problem of pursuing the discussions. In the face of the European menace it was obviously desirable to give expression to the needs of joint defence. To the means, however, of effecting this end, the most careful consideration had to be given in order that there might be no grounds for the belief that there was any attempt on Canada's part to influence the policies or to interfere in the domestic affairs of a neutral country. Had there not been, between the president and myself, complete confidence in each other's purpose and motives, I question if the situation could have been met without occasioning genuine embarrassment to one side or the other, if not indeed to both. Fortunately, in the light of our previous conversations, there was no danger of the position being misunderstood, and my visit with the president at Warm Springs, in April of the present year, afforded an exceptional opportunity for a careful review of the whole situation.

This is perhaps an appropriate place for me to say that, from the beginning, and at the time of each conversation, the president made it perfectly clear that his primary interest in the subject was the defence of the United States. I was equally frank in making it clear that my concern was the effective defence of Canada, and the defence of the British commonwealth of nations as a whole.

If one thing above another became increasingly evident in the course of our conversations, it was that our respective countries had a common interest in the matter of the defence of this continent. Since this was the case, everything, pointed to the wisdom of planning carefully in advance for whatever contingency might arise.

The conversations begun between the president and myself before the war, in the direct manner I have described, and at Warm Springs taken up anew after Canada had entered the war, were supplemented as the weeks went by, by conversations conducted through diplomatic channels. Staff conversations followed in due course.