

The intermingling of the populations of Canada and the United States is almost unprecedented in history. About 30,000,000 people cross our boundary in the course of a normal year. Some are going north in search of solitude and game; some south in search of noise and games. We cross and we often stay. So attractive, indeed, have been the flesh-pots and the cultural opportunities of the United States to Canadians, that almost one-third of all the people of Canadian descent now live in the United States. Why, in spite of these attractions, they could ever decide to leave Canada, I never will understand. For it is merely repeating the obvious to say that there is no country like Canada, not even the United States. When Canadians, however, are misguided enough to cross that border, and stay, they make no minority problem in the areas where they settle in the United States. They fit in without delay or difficulty, and become indistinguishable in a very short time from those who have been here since Plymouth Rock or Pocahontas.

They become university presidents, managing directors, movie and baseball players, clergymen and Kiwanians. They are, I suppose, the most easily assimilated of your immigrant groups; so much so that they do not form groups at all. I am afraid that it is easier to form a Slovenian or an Armenian Club in a United States city than a Canadian Club, because Canadians do not feel the same need for associations of that kind in a country which is so much like their own; and which they already know all about from radio, screen and magazine. Canadian-Americans (the hyphen doesn't divide, it unites) have no divided loyalties; or rather their sentimental feeling for their former country, Canada, does not prejudice their loyalty and duty to their new country, the United States. This is, of course, because they find many of the same basic things to which to be loyal here, that they had in Canada; the same way of life, the same emphasis on individual freedom under the law and the same spirit of democratic progress.

Nevertheless, the good relations between our two countries, the way in which they can co-operate to their mutual advantage in the sorry spectacle of our post-war world, must rest on something more solid and real than the friendly exchange of compliments and mutual back pats at joint celebrations. It must rest on information and not on ignorance; on real understanding, not on a casual appraisal; on an appreciation of our differences, as well as our similarities.

Canada and the United States were not always friends. They have passed through difficult periods of history. We have had our 125 years of peace; not because there was nothing to quarrel about, but because we spoke the same language even when we differed, and could always find a peaceful solution to our differences. Anyone can keep the peace when there is nothing to row about, but we have had our rows without wars, and that is something for pride. It might easily have been very different. Our boundary disputes, for instance, might have left a sour feeling of bitterness and defeat. We Canadians feel that we have lost out in these disputes, both to the United Kingdom and to the United States.

Take a look at a map of the Pacific Coast, and you will wonder why United States territory should straggle down like a wayward ribbon for hundreds of miles into British Columbia. That Panhandle, which of course should be ours, was taken from us by the United States in what we think was one of the most unjust arbitral awards in history. If that had happened in Europe, its sad heritage of national suspicions and racial hatreds, you can imagine what would have been the result. But in Canada, when the Panhandle is mentioned, no patriotic schoolboy stands to attention, salutes the flag, faces British Columbia and vows that some day that territory will be regained. We have more sense than that, and, in any event, I am afraid we are not big enough to regain it, even if we wished to.