

This year we added one-third of a million inhabitants to our population and a new province to our country when Newfoundland joined Canada. This union, the principle of which had been discussed ever since 1867, was consummated on April 1, last. It completes the natural and geographical limits of our country.

Internally we have also reached the last stage of our evolution towards absolute sovereignty. We have now decided that appeals to the Privy Council in London no longer need be made, and at present we are endeavoring to come to an understanding on a procedure whereby all future amendments to our Constitution will be made in Canada. Before such a procedure is adopted, however, we wish to establish precise and clear safeguards in favour of provincial rights and those of the minorities. We have a perfect right to adopt such measures but in order to exercise them ourselves at home, we wish to come to an understanding about the procedure whereby such rights as those mentioned above would be fully protected. I need not labour the importance of safeguarding such rights before an assembly of Franco-Americans.

You are well aware, indeed, that there are some aspects of our national life which are different from your own. I should like to be permitted to cite a few. There is, first of all, the fact that we do not exactly represent a facsimile of the great American melting pot. Canada is a nation based on the association of descendants of two great races living in equality. Those two races for a long time indeed were rivals and, at times, enemies. They spoke different languages, were attached to different forms of Christian heritage and ancestral traditions. Each was most anxious to maintain and develop its cultural heritage, but at the same time to participate in a common effort towards the material development of a country which extends its limits over a continent. We are solicitous in Canada that it shall be the aim of both to march hand in hand toward the common goal. In Canada, the association of two races has given our people customs and qualities which enable them to understand and to take into account the viewpoint of others and thus occasionally to play the role of mediator in international affairs at the United Nations. Thereby we work towards facilitating the understanding necessary to good relations between all peoples.

Our association with the Commonwealth and the fact that our national sovereignty is the result of a gradual evolution rather than revolution resulted in the maintenance by Canadians, at least in appearance, of closer relations with the European world than have Americans. In a certain way, Canada has been able to serve as a bridge between the old world and the new. That was illustrated in 1914 and again in 1939.

If we have maintained strong ties with Europe, it doesn't mean that we are Europeans. Those of you who have visited Canada know better than that. We are an American country and an American nation. We have the same characteristics, failings also perhaps but the same qualities and aspirations, the same confidence and even impetuosity native to the New World. Like the United States we sincerely wish for peace in the world. We are aware of our national resources and we have no aggressive designs. We should like to develop to the utmost our abundant resources and we believe that, in doing this, we can increase the standard of living of our citizens and contribute to the general advancement of humanity.

It is often said that Canada did not need a revolution to obtain independence. This is true, but one should not forget