

neighbours of ours. How well do we really know the Americans?

This doubt on my part is, I expect, partly the uneasiness which comes over any foreigner upon closer personal experience of a country in which he has actually come to live. Close quarters tend to dispel the certainty encouraged by a more distant view. But it is, I believe, more than this. I wonder whether we have not tended, recently at any rate, to proceed on an easy assumption we have not really scrutinized - the assumption that all Canadians, instinctively or automatically, know and understand Americans.

One of the reasons why our judgment of the United States may not be wholly objective lies in our history. Most Canadians, I think, inherit unconsciously some of the anxieties of their ancestors. In 1775, Montreal was occupied by an American Army; Quebec was invested. In 1813, a later invasion from the United States was checked at Chateauguay. The St. Lawrence frontier was kept on edge twenty five years later by American "sympathizers" who sought to liberate Canada from the imperial yoke. The Civil War was followed by some pretty blunt and sinister talk in and out of Congress of the intention of nature to include the whole continent within "the magic circle of the American Union". These times are long gone - but they are not wholly forgotten. Whether conscious or not, there is among Canadians almost a "racial" memory of the days when Americans were thinking and talking out loud of expansion northward, of the "manifest destiny" of their country.

Nowadays, in neither nation, is there any thought, much less mention, of the old bogey of "annexation". Nevertheless, it seems to me that there remains in our Canadian attitude toward the United States a curious sense, no longer of fear or anxiety, but of competition, of somewhat unequal contest with the big fellow on the same street. Hugh MacLennan says that we want to be noticed. Perhaps that's much the same thing. In any event, such an element in our national make-up serves to cloud our judgment and at times even to prejudice our normal feelings of confidence and friendship. If I am right that there tends to be some element of bias in our attitude toward things American (and I would not exaggerate its importance), it has probably been given some impetus by the great additions to our own wealth and strength these past ten years. We have, too, been encouraged to take ourselves pretty seriously by flattering attentions paid us by other nations - not least by the Americans themselves. These events have not improved our capacity for objective judgment of our neighbours.

Over the years one of our principal complaints about Americans is that they know so little about Canada. We have thought, and often said, that the United States has tended to ignore us, to take us for granted. We have all heard stories of Americans asking what taxes we pay to London. We have all encountered grotesque geographical