

A speech delivered by the Canadian Ambassador to Venezuela, Mr. H.G. Norman, at a luncheon sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce of Venezuela, at Caracas, August 11, 1953.

I was asked to comment on the development of Canadian - Venezuelan economic relations. After accepting the invitation to speak, I began wondering if I had not been a little hasty. On looking up the figures, I noticed that the United States already enjoys approximately 70 per cent of the total imports of this country, with the remainder being divided amongst about a dozen other countries. Now, we Canadians are frankly out to bring our share more into line with our purchases from Venezuela, and any such increase must come either from an increase in the imports of this country or from those now being enjoyed by other countries than our own. I felt that coming to you today and telling you what we have done and we hope to do in the future might run the risk of "tipping our hand", as it were; but on "second thoughts" I came to the conclusion that any facts I might present to you today could be ascertained by yourselves by research from many different sources, all of which are freely available to you. In any event, though we may endeavour to capture more trade with Venezuela, it need not of necessity be a loss to the United States, as some of the resultant effects can well be to its benefit since the United States has an investment in Canada estimated to be in the neighbourhood of eight billion dollars, and, further, some of Canada's exports to Venezuela are from branch plants of United States firms which are located in Canada.

Canadian Development

Prior to commenting on Canadian-Venezuelan economic relations, it seems to me necessary to review what has been happening in Canada during the past few years. For whatever development may have taken place in our relations with Venezuela or any other country, is necessarily the result of what has been happening in Canada. This examination of the past and the present is also most important in trying to envisage the trends which are likely to take place in the future, in which I am sure we are all interested.

During the past two or three years, a great deal has been written about Canada in various American publications and, like many Canadians, I am wondering if we may not be running some danger of being over-dramatized and over-publicized. For example, much has been written about the Canadian "boom". If this implies that Canada is expanding and prosperous, the description is accurate; however, the word "boom" suggests to many a temporary and artificial prosperity accompanied by excessive speculation and ending inevitably in a "bust". In this sense, as indicated in the London Economist, there is no Canadian boom and anyone coming to Canada to participate in it will be disappointed.