

As you can see Canada is approaching the preservation of the marine environment issue at the Law of the Sea Conference from the perspective of a coastal state although we recognize that we have an important stake in the freedom of commerce and navigation by sea. The United States position as a great maritime power gives you a somewhat different perspective. However, both Canada and the United States are working for a successful conclusion to the Conference which will meet the very important concerns of both countries on this issue and the many other vital issues facing the Conference.

One of the most important areas that determine the quality of life in Canada is its cultural vitality. Without a vigorous and distinctive cultural life, national independence is nothing but an empty shell. Canadian concerns about our cultural survival may seem puzzling to you Americans who are about to celebrate your Bicentennial.

But although the first French settlers came to the Saint Lawrence Valley some time before the first New Englanders, Canada is in fact a much younger society. We celebrated our first centennial as a nation only seven years ago; and as a result, the maturation of our national culture is still very much under way.

This process, by virtue of Canada's history and sociology, is somewhat complex and more deliberate than your own. For example, we are committed to the cultivation of two official languages, to the preservation of regional identities, to the enhancement of our citizens' varied ethnic backgrounds, among which our native peoples, Indian and Inuit, have a very special status. In other words, we are deliberately seeking to avoid the emergence of a uniform "Canadian way of Life". The Canadian dream is one of diversity, of "multiculturalism", as we call it; and the pattern we want for our society is that of the mosaic. All this may appear somewhat bewildering for Americans, who have forged their own highly distinctive tradition in such matters. This bewilderment may be compounded by the fact that Canadians can not speak so confidently of their "manifest destiny" in cultural affairs; for the people of the United States seldom realize the tremendous cultural impact they have on Canada through television, radio, magazines, books, films and other media.

Canadian concern about this situation is not new. A Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Sciences and Letters, made recommendations in 1951 on the situation of the arts, sciences and letters in Canada at that time. The final report made the following comment in its opening section:

"American influences on Canadian life to say the least are impressive. There should be no thought of interfering with the liberty of all Canadians to enjoy them.....It cannot be denied, however, that a vast and disproportionate amount of material coming from a single alien source may stifle rather than stimulate our creative efforts....We must not be blind, however, to the very present danger of permanent dependence."