

For Canada, with the United States as a neighbour and the United Kingdom as a mother country, it is a first axiom of policy to do what it can to maintain the greatest possible English speaking unity, for national as well as for even more important international reasons. But to a Canadian, especially to one speaking French, English speaking unity is not enough. Indeed, it would be not inappropriate if I spoke to you about English speaking unity in Canada's other official language, French. Indeed, I had conceived that somewhat whimsical idea of beginning my talk on English speaking unity in French, and was restrained only out of respect for that beautiful language.

Language alone is not, in truth, a sufficient bond between peoples; indeed, it is not at times a bond at all, though I would not go as far as Bernard Shaw when he said that Great Britain and the United States were two countries divided by a common language. I cannot refrain from adding that if Bernard Shaw were alive today and could read an account of a baseball game in a New York tabloid, followed by a cricket or golf report in the Manchester Guardian or the London Times, by Neville Cardus or Bernard Darwin, he might not worry so much about the common language!

The bond of language, as a matter of fact, is occasionally reduced to the ability we share to criticize and argue in words that cannot be softened by translation. At times it seems to assist us in learning more easily the wrong things rather than the right ones about each other. I must confess that I could wish that one or two American newspapers and magazines were published in Tamil and that one or two radio or television commentators carried on in Swahili. And I'm sure the feeling is the same here about the use of the English language by certain speakers and writers in Canada and the United Kingdom.

A Canadian, Bruce Hutchison, writing in an American publication a few weeks ago, quoted a wise old Cambridge don on this common language dilemma, as follows:

"Most of our troubles with the Americans stem from the awful barrier of a common language. Since they speak the same language, the British and Americans expect each other to be the same sort of people. When they turn out to be utterly different both are disappointed and angered, as if the other fellows had somehow let them down. An Englishman isn't disturbed when a Frenchman eats snails or keeps a mistress. That is the French way. But when the American chews gum, dresses oddly, uses a queer accent or starts a fight in a pub, we find it inexcusable because it isn't British. And the Americans feel the same way about us."

Nevertheless, to continue on a less cynical note, while unity among all free peoples is essential for peace and progress, there is a special reason for and importance to unity among those peoples whose common use of the English language, whatever disadvantages it may occasionally have, does symbolize the important truth that we derive so much of our culture, institutions, ideas and customs from a common ancestry. We are very close together, in an ever shrinking world, and though propinquity does