

With the growth in the variety and number of subjects at play at any given time in current Canadian/United States relations, it is not hard to see that the dynamics of the relationship are changing. But normal differences, when they arise, should not be reason to call into question the fundamental attitudes governing the relationship. The range of our differences has, in this century, always been limited, and indeed they have always been few in number when compared to the multiplicity of day-to-day, non-contentious dealings which make up the bulk of our relations and give them their character.

As Canada and the United States found themselves in new national and international circumstances in the 1970's, both governments saw matter-of-factly that a quantitative increase in our bilateral issues was predictable. The challenge for both governments therefore -- and I have no doubt the challenge can be met -- is to take realistic and responsible steps to safeguard our respective legitimate interests, and to accomplish this without discriminating against each other's interest.

One result of the changes affecting our relations is that whereas in the past Canadians were particularly conscious of the impact which United States decisions could have on Canada, there is today a higher profile to Canadian actions and attitudes in the United States as important sectors of opinion grow more sensitized to the degree to which Canadian activities can, and do, affect United States interests. The result has been that the relationship has come under closer public scrutiny than in the past, by Americans now as well as by Canadians.

In this context, I think it is important to underline that our two countries, however they apply themselves, will not be able to reach some kind of bilateral millennium. There is a continuity to Canada/United States relations, and as I have tried to point out, the recent increase in our bilateral activity is more than a short-lived anomaly. Changes from within each country and from without, often not of our making, will continue to affect us both, sometimes creating new problems and at other times new opportunities.

Energy: An Example of Change

The area of energy is an example of how changed circumstances can create both problems and opportunities.

In the fifties and sixties as Canada's oil and gas industry developed, these resources were exported in increasing volumes to United States markets -- to the extent permitted by American quotas -- while significant imports of American coal supplied -- and continues to supply -- much of Ontario's industrial and energy needs. These were years of increasing prosperity in industrialized countries, accompanied by complacency about secure and seemingly inexhaustible supplies of low cost oil and gas.