

The result is that no American can follow closely the course of events in Canada, even by studying four or five of the best newspapers. A good deal more Canadian news is being published than even two or three years ago, but it is still sketchy and erratic in coverage. Any Canadian who reads a good Canadian paper can follow closely the course of events in the United States. He can learn as promptly as an American about election campaigns, the price of stocks in New York, the baseball scores, the latest doings in Hollywood, and even the most recent lurid murder mystery. Since most Canadian centers of population are within a hundred miles of the international boundary, he can tune his radio to American programs nearly as easily as to Canadian, and he frequently does so, for better as well as for worse.

I am not boasting about the superior knowledge of Canadians. The point is that we in Canada have to know more about the United States than Americans have to know about Canada. Would it be very misleading of me to say that when most Americans think of Canada they have visions of plenty of ice and snow, of handsome members of the Mounted Police (doing on the films things which they would never conceivably do in real life), of stalwart hockey players, perhaps of good whiskey, of great wheat fields, of Arctic wastes, and of lakes full of fish waiting to be caught. Asked to name prominent Canadians, they might mention my friend Mr. Raymond Massey, and possibly Mr. Mackenzie King, who has just relinquished the office of Prime Minister after holding it in all for over twenty-one years.

This vision of what Canada is thought to be like has, of course, elements of truth. We have all the things that I have mentioned, but they do not constitute the warp and woof of Canadian national life. Behind these distortions one frequently encounters some more serious misconceptions, to some of which I propose to refer. One can divide them into two rather contradictory classes: those arising from the belief that Canadians are "Britishers" living in Canada - displaced citizens of the British Isles - and those based on the idea that Canadians are "just like us" - displaced Americans who have somehow stayed north of the international boundary.

The first misconception is the hardest to deal with briefly, because it involves a consideration of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is no wonder that the nature of the Commonwealth is misunderstood. It is nowhere exactly defined. It certainly possesses no constitution. It evolves from year to year. It has evolved in the last year particularly with remarkable rapidity; India, Pakistan and Ceylon have become full members.

I always find it easier to say what the Commonwealth is not than what it is. Its countries have no central government. There is no-one who is able to speak for all of them. They are under no obligation to pursue common policies, and very frequently they follow divergent lines at international conferences. There is no obligation for them to make war together. Each of the members is under no compulsion of any sort to agree with any or all of the others. The United Kingdom is primus inter pares, but receives no taxes or tribute from the rest. Only the people of the United Kingdom and of the colonies are governed from London. The King lives there, and other Commonwealth countries owe him allegiance; but, in the old phrase, he reigns but does not rule, and he exercises no political power in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

After this list of negatives I shall try to state the position more positively, using Canada to illustrate. Canada began just as the United States began, as a group of separate British colonies. Like the original thirteen states in the colonial era, the colonies in Canada had their own legislatures and wide powers of self-government. Eighty-one years ago they joined in a federal union, which now contains nine provinces and will probably shortly secure a tenth through the addition of Newfoundland, which

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