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Canada/United States consultations set a pattern for the future, 1

First contract after signature of pact between Canada and European Communities, 2

Education in Canada – report of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development released, 3

Master paintings from the U.S.S.R., 3

Military association centennial, 4

Athletes – born or made?, 4

Untappable telephones, 5

Canadian Indian appointed to senior federal post, 5

Ship safety system, 6

News briefs, 6

Canada/United States consultations set a pattern for the future

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan J. MacEachen, was in Washington August 17 and 18 at the invitation of the United States Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger.

Among the bilateral and multilateral matters discussed was the “border television issue”, which had arisen over the Canadian Government’s decision to delete commercial advertisements carried into Canada from U.S. broadcast stations. Mr. MacEachen said in Washington that a meeting between officials of the two countries would take place in September to try to resolve the situation.

Dr. Kissinger was host at a formal dinner for Mr. MacEachen at the State Department on August 17, during which both ministers made short speeches.

The following excerpts are from Mr. MacEachen’s address:

* * * *

The close dealings which characterize Canada/United States relations have become almost a byword. Perhaps this is in part because we have had much experience. There has always been a full agenda of common interests to be pursued and problems to be resolved. There always will be. I like to think that the numerous meetings which Dr. Kissinger and I have made a point of holding in various parts of the world have played a part in setting the tone for the day-to-day dialogue which takes place between our officials. I regard it as most important that we preserve the habit of ready and continuing willingness to communicate openly.

This means that representatives from two neighbouring nations – nations who know and trust each other well – are able to speak candidly and realistically as friends. And, while it does not follow that sentiment and goodwill alone colour our perceptions of each other, neither are these irrelevant or unworthy factors.

At the same time – in a world still struggling to rise above the confines, imperatives and abuses of national sovereignty – we remain two nation states of unequal power, each with its own defined interests and objectives, most of which correspond, but some of which conflict. It is also true that as a nation, trying firmly yet responsibly to chart the direction of our own national development, Canada has taken a number of policy initiatives which are not directed against, but which affect most, our closest friends in the United States.

There is a balance to be struck here, between co-operation in mutual endeavour and the building of one’s own national strengths from within. A new balance is not always easy to achieve, but responsible Canadians agree that its achievement is a realistic and worthy goal.

Balance should not be misconstrued

Of course, depending on one’s perspective of change, I suspect that Canada’s efforts to seek a new balance can be misconstrued. Perhaps this accounts for the conclusion of some observers that Canada/U.S.A. relations are somehow moving out of phase in certain

Mr. MacEachen to the Pacific

Following his visit to Washington, August 17 and 18, Mr. MacEachen was in Ottawa for a brief stay before flying to the Pacific region on August 20 for a 17-day tour of Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand.

The purpose of the visit, said Mr. MacEachen before leaving, was “to add substance to our role and our appreciation of our role as a Pacific nation. And also to work at the strengthening of bilateral relations with each of these countries, and to conduct talks with the leaders of each of these countries on Asian questions and obviously to add to my own understanding of the part of the world that I have not hitherto visited”.

