

the British Crown did keep us somewhat closer in spirit to Europe than you were. When the First World War broke out in 1914, our status in international law made us an automatic belligerent, but that was all our status did. The decision to participate actively in the prosecution of the war was made in Ottawa in our own Parliament by the freely-elected representatives of our own people. For many, that decision was a matter of course because of our sentimental ties with the mother country, but many others did come to the conclusion somewhat earlier than the people of the United States that, if the world was to be a decent place to live in, this military clique in Germany had to be shown that they could not win even at their own chosen game of war.

I suppose it will always remain a subject of debate whether, if the United States had not gone to war in 1917, and if the Germans had won the war—two ifs and we in Canada are still apt to regard them as two separate ifs—the independence and integrity of the United States and Canada would have been in immediate jeopardy. But there can be no argument that defeat of the Allies in 1917 or 1918 would have resulted in a much more uncomfortable world for North Americans to live in than the one we had been used to before 1914.

After the war, as many will recall, the initial wave of enthusiasm for the League of Nations was quickly followed by a reaction of disillusionment and isolation. In your country many felt it had been a mistake to go into the war, that the war had settled nothing, and that, for the future, the right course for the American people was to turn their backs resolutely on the Europeans and leave them to stew in their own juice. Canada became a member of the League of Nations, and, though we never repudiated our membership, our enthusiasm certainly waned and there was, with us, too, a strong reflection of the sentiment for isolation which prevailed on your side of the border.

When war came again in 1939, Canada's status had become different. We were not automatically at war; we had to make our decision for ourselves in law as well as in fact. We did decide to go to war, but many of us made the decision with a heavy heart and some misgivings. A large number of our people asked themselves uneasily whether it was the fate of Canada in each generation to sacrifice the finest of its youth in the interminable quarrels of Europeans. On the other hand, we all shared your horror of the regime Hitler had fastened on Germany, and his brutal aggressions against Germany's neighbours. We could not believe that, so long as the Nazi system lasted, any country would be safe. The danger to our North American society became even clearer when Japan by that attack on Pearl Harbor dragged you in and proclaimed to the world its confident expectation that with Germany and Italy they were going to overcome us all. We knew they could not do it but nevertheless we were thus, twice in one generation, forced into wars which neither of us had had any share in starting, and which we did not want and in which we did have to commit all our resources. Some felt that with more foresight those wars might have been prevented, but certainly we had not wanted them, we had not started them, and yet we had not been able to keep out.

Speaking for Canada, I can say that, by 1945, our people were overwhelmingly convinced that the only way that they could keep out of world wars was to help establish the kind of world in which there would not be any war. I can speak with some assurance for Canada on this point because we debated the issues in our Parliament, and reached virtual unanimity on them, before sending to San Francisco a delegation representing our main political parties to share in founding the organization of the United Nations. The main reason why we were unanimous in 1945 was precisely because we had not been able to keep out of war in 1914 and 1939 and because you had not been able to keep out of war. Our conviction was greatly strengthened because of the almost revolutionary change which had come over opinion in the United States between 1940 and 1945.