

*Non-Canadian Publications*

I must take exception to the actions of the cabinet, this government and the support it has from some of its backbenchers with regard to the unilateral actions being taken without any discussion with the United States. I am sorry the minister is not here this afternoon to tell us whether he had any discussion with our friends in the United States about the program. Has he discussed what share of the dollars we will get out of television in British Columbia or in southern Ontario? I realize we are entitled to a share and we should have a fair and proportionate share.

In any dealings I have had with Americans, I have found them to be fair, intelligent and very understanding, and I am sure that an equitable arrangement can be worked out whereby we can maintain our status as an independent people and also be held in esteem and trust by our friends. This is of fundamental importance and goes far beyond the amendment we are dealing with today. While I realize that I have been dealing primarily with our neighbours to the south, to a degree this could affect our relationship in the whole world of communications. We all know that the world has become smaller as technical means of communication have been developed.

In recent years, and during the past five years in particular, the relationship of this country with her neighbour to the south has deteriorated to a dangerous degree as a result of our lack of consideration, discussion and even common courtesy. The policy of this government seems to be to create dissension by implementing ill-timed and poorly conceived decisions directly affecting our friends to the south. In earlier years, leadership in Canada was exemplified by open negotiation, dialogue and knowledge of that country's interests and their effect upon our own. When leadership exactly the opposite in nature took over our country, the closeness from which every Canadian benefited gradually diminished, and in more recent years one could almost come to the conclusion that the Prime Minister and his ministers feel that our southern neighbour is an enemy rather than the best friend Canada has.

On reflection, this continuing disagreement of Canada with the United States government and its officials appears to be personal revenge on the part of the Prime Minister. Recently he said on his visit to Cuba that he wanted to go there prior to any representation from the United States. He did not say why, but I am sure there must be a question mark in the minds of Americans, and perhaps while he is out in British Columbia he would be well advised to go on one of those television stations—perhaps KVOS—and tell our neighbour why he made that statement.

In my opinion, personal spite or grievance of a leader of any country should not be imposed upon its population through policies at the national level, just to prove one man's authority and to fulfil his desire to get even. If people in public office followed that pattern at every level, a country would be placed in an impossible position and would have a very black image indeed. When a prime minister and his cabinet set this type of example, everyone suffers, on both sides of the border. To be a good leader one must first learn to be a good follower. There is no place in our country for childish behaviour by a government leader at any level.

[Mr. Towers.]

● (1500)

Incidentally, this is not the time for people to be looking inward; they should be looking outward. Why do the government and the cabinet insist on proceeding with these unreasonable and unnecessary restrictive policies which operate to the detriment of our loyal and friendly neighbour to the south?

The bill now before the House, without amendment, is just one more example of decision without forethought, without consideration, and without discussion. I believe that if the minister responsible for the bill had made a trip south of the border to discuss the problem we would not now be spending all this time debating it. Instead he delivered it as a bolt from the blue, and he feels it must be put through regardless of repercussions within Canada or in the United States.

How much longer does the government think it can bulldoze its way through with this type of legislation and expect our neighbour to turn the other cheek? If the shoe were on the other foot the protests of cabinet ministers opposite would be heard around the world, similar to a pampered child who fell on his face because of his own clumsiness yet tried to place the blame on someone far removed from his come-down. I can visualize all the reports stressing what we did for the United States, plus the imaginations of every anti-United States person within and beyond the North American borders.

If Canada wants to create enmity why not choose a country which is opposed to our way of life, which does not believe in basic freedoms or the right of the individual? Goodness knows the world has more than enough countries under dictatorships. I hope we can still maintain our friends among those countries which think and act as we do. Canada needs, and her people desire, the friendliness of the United States and its citizens.

The good will and understanding between Canadians and their southern neighbours is constant and deep. The border does not enter into their minds. There cannot be a line drawn when it comes to friendliness, co-operation, admiration, and communication among people. I would venture to say that relations between people of the maritimes and New England, between Ontario and the central United States, between the prairie provinces and the Dakotas, and between British Columbia and Washington are more loyal and closer than ties between the different regions of our own country because of the fact that two thirds of our population live within 300 miles of the United States border. The United States can get along without us, but we would have a difficult time getting along without the United States as long as there is that 4,000 or 5,000 mile unprotected border.

For what reason did the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner), or whoever had the brainwave to formulate Bill C-58, take action which could only heighten the doubt the United States now has about the reliability of the Canadian government? This arbitrary piece of legislation, added to Canada's several ill-conceived agricultural policies, implemented on the spur of the moment by our federal government, must only underline the question: can the United States rely on Canada with her on and off again, up and down restrictive policies initiated at the apparent whim of a government careless of our historic ties and