

There has been a tendency, especially, if I may say so, in the United States, to take this happy state of affairs for granted; to assume that it has always been so and will continue that way without any special effort on anybody's part. There has been no war and no warships, no guards and no shots for 140 years. Everything is O.K. about Canada, so we can worry about Guatemala or Germany or Gaza or Matsu.

This, I suggest, is the wrong attitude, unjustified historically and unwise politically.

We have not always been good neighbours. If there has been peace, it was, for a century after our last war in 1812-15, peace with friction. For fifty years after, indeed, it was peace never far removed from conflict. The "unguarded border" of every contemporary speech on Canadian-American relations was disturbed by incidents, patrolled by soldiers and the scene of many a bitter dispute. If there were no warships on the Great Lakes after the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817, it was due in large part to the fact that so many huge warships had been or were being built at that time on Lake Ontario that both sides were going broke!

Why, forts were being built on the border as late as 1872. It is amusing to learn that the United States were so worried about us at one time, in the early 19th century, that they built a strong stone tower to block an advance down Lake Champlain. Then the border was resurveyed and it was found that the fort was on the Canadian side. That, incidentally, is in our view (which, of course, may be prejudiced) the only boundary settlement with our neighbour in history that didn't cost us territory. There was no doubt a congressional investigation into such gross carelessness!

The history of our border has not, in fact, been one long, sweet song. From those earlier hostile times, when United States troops burnt Toronto and, in return, the Red Coast burnt the White House, down to the Fenian raids of the '60s and '70s, this song has been frequently interrupted by war whoops.

Lots of trouble there was, but common sense and generosity and vision prevailed. Good neighbourliness was achieved long ago and has been maintained. From guns across the border it has become hands - and cars - across the border, with a short period during prohibition times when it was hiccups! We have moved from hostility to tolerance, to an abiding friendship and, on the part of the United States, to an increasing interest in its northern neighbours, who are now on the march to a great destiny.

That destiny cannot, however, in the dangerous, but inter-dependent world of today, be separated from that of the United States. The facts of geography, strategy and economics make this certain. We are inevitably linked together as mountain climbers scaling an Alpine peak. While this gives us comfort in Canada and a feeling of security, it also, at times, makes for some uneasiness. We are, you know, behind you on that rope, so we like to know where we are going, and even why! We are not the type of people - we are too much like you for that - who can be pulled along automatically. This means that when we have our differences of opinion - as we do and will - being North Americans, we will express our views in the frank and straight-forward idiom which you understand.