

Canadians for their revolt against the English. There were several reasons why they did not get that support. One was that the traditional enemy of the average French-speaking Canadian of the 18th century was not the remote English nation across the Atlantic, but the English-speaking people of Boston and New England, the English-speaking people of Albany and the Hudson valley, with whom they had been trading scalps for a century and a half.

In any event, Canada did not join in your revolution, and we Canadians retained our connection with the British Crown, and hundreds of refugees from your War of Independence moved northwards to lay the foundations of English-speaking Canada. In Canada, these immigrants were called Loyalists, and though they were loyal, though they were determined to maintain the political connection of their new home with old England, most of them were also determined to manage their own affairs.

The political freedom you achieved by the sudden stroke of revolution, we achieved more slowly, more gradually, but we did achieve it by evolution. Without breaking our tie with the British Crown, we transformed a disunited group of small colonies into a single nation, stretching, like yours, from one sea to another, and I venture to say just as free as the United States. But our continuing political tie with 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 that 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.