

The international situation changes from year to year, sometimes from week to week; governments change, their personnel changes, policies change. Absolute statements of policy, absolute undertakings to follow other governments, whatever the situation, are out of the question. At the same time the decisions that would be made by our government and parliament, like those of other governments and other parliaments, are not incalculable, not matters of chance and whim. Much of course would depend on the special circumstances of the day. But equally important in determining our attitude are certain permanent factors of interest, of sentiment, of opinion, which set the limits within any feasible and united policy must be determined.

May I refer to some of these known, in fact, obvious factors.

The first factor is the one that is present and dominant in the policy of every other country, from Britain and Sweden to Argentina and the United States. I mean the existence of a national feeling and the assumption that first place will be given to the interests, immediate, or long range, of the country itself. The growth of national feeling in Canada has been inevitable at a time when nationalism has come to dominate every quarter of the world. It is a more defensible and enduring growth than in many other lands. It is not based on any desire for expansion or revenge. This half continent affords ample room and the material basis for the building of a great nation. It is clear that this widely scattered dominion can only be welded together by the action of a positive and distinctive Canadian patriotism. A strong and dominant national feeling is not a luxury in Canada, it is a necessity. Without it this country could not exist. A divided Canada can be of little help to any country, and least of all to itself. The national feeling has found political expression in the steady growth of self-government, at first in domestic, later in external affairs. It has stood the test and the strain of economic depression and of the local differences to which depression gives a temporary importance. We are and will remain Canadians, devoted, first and last, to the interests of Canada, but Canadians, I hope, who will be able to take a long range as well as a short range view of what Canada's interests require.

In many, but certainly not in all cases, this growth of national feeling has strengthened the desire for a policy which its defenders call *minding one's own business* and which its critics call *isolationism*. Assuming, it is urged, that Canadians like other people will

put their own interests first, what do our interests demand, what amount of *night errantry* abroad do our resources permit? Canada, it is contended is not a country of unlimited powers; it has not the capacity to stand indefinite strains. We have tremendous tasks to do at home, in housing the people, in caring for the aged and helpless, in relieving drought and unemployment, in building roads, in meeting our heavy burden of debt, in making provision for Canada's defence, and in bringing our standards of living and civilization to the levels our knowledge now makes possible. There is no great margin of realizable wealth for this purpose; we must, to a greater or less extent, choose between keeping our own house in order, and trying to save Europe and Asia. The idea that every twenty years this country should automatically and as a matter of course take part in a war overseas for democracy or self-determination of other small nations, that a country which has all it can do to run itself should feel called upon to save, periodically, a continent that cannot run itself, and to these ends risk the lives of its people, risk bankruptcy and political disunion, seems to many a nightmare and sheer madness.

A second enduring factor is our position as a north American nation, and particularly our neighbourhood to the United States. Geographically, that position has not changed in the past thirty or forty years, but our appreciation of the position has changed. There was a time in the memory of all of us when friction was more in the picture than friendship, when memories of old conflicts, line fence disputes on tariffs or on boundaries or on fisheries, together with the irresponsible colonial position of Canada, and the misconceptions and sectional interests that flourished in the United States, prevented our being the good neighbours we should have been. In the past generation, and particularly in the past ten years, there has come a great and heartening change in that relationship. We have come to know one another better. Individual contacts have increased by business intercourse, by tourist travel, by the agencies of press and radio. Government contacts have increased by the exchange of legations and visits of members of governments. The changing position in the world outside has put both our occasional and slight differences, and our great and enduring common interests, in their proper perspective. It is a realization of the wider implications of self-interest.

We have been considering at length this session, as we did at the first session of the present parliament, one of the most notable and practical evidences of that new under-