

The international scene on which we have to gaze as we enter 1952 is not a particularly bright one though whether you think it is better or worse depends on whether you think the glass is half full, or half emptied. There is more in the picture to discourage than to encourage. So much of the news is depressing. I even read the other day that the leaning tower of Pisa would collapse by 2115 A.D. I also read in the same newspaper that a United States Congressman had proposed that Canada should be bought from Great Britain and annexed to the United States, a proposal which if it were to be taken seriously would be very funny. When I was tempted - as I was - in reading that report to get all hot and bothered over such ignorance, the temptation was removed in part at least by the Canadian headlines to the story which called the Congressman a Senator. Ignorance of other countries is not the exclusive preserve of any one country. But such ignorance is a shaky foundation for respect and understanding. That so far as understanding is concerned applies also to ignorance and indifference of the foreign policy of one's own country. This, in its turn, means that those who are concerned directly with the formation of such policy should tell the people to whom they are responsible what they are trying to do. That is one reason why I am here today.

In a sense, though not in any exact sense, the foreign policy of Canada can be divided into two categories. The first part is concerned with the preservation of peace and the establishment of security through collective international action. This includes our policy within the United Nations and within NATO. The other category deals more specifically with relations with other states. Very often, I admit, the two categories overlap and run into each other.

In the latter category we think primarily of our relations within the Commonwealth and with the United States of America. As far as the former is concerned, the Commonwealth association is as loose as ever, and, I think, as strong as ever. It should be and is a first principle of Canadian policy to maintain and strengthen that association, under the Crown, which is and will remain not only its symbol, but which also demonstrates the continuity of our own history and the depth of its roots. With the United Kingdom, which is the centre and heart of the Commonwealth, our political relations were never better. Of course, we deplore the present financial situation which prevents the fullest realization of the trade possibilities between our two countries. At the same time, we appreciate and try to understand the difficulties of the United Kingdom in this regard, difficulties which arise in large part from the unparalleled sacrifices that the British have had to make in two wars, and from the burden that they are bearing at the present time. We can only hope that these difficulties will be overcome and that the short-range plans essential for this purpose will not weaken the possibilities of strengthening further long-range economic and trade relationships between us.

Our Commonwealth of Nations is continually renewing its usefulness in different forms. It is of particular value at the present time in that it acts, through its three Asian members, as a bridge, one of the few bridges, between the East and the West. We cannot, I think, stress too much or too often the importance of our family of nations in this regard. It is one of the great new services that the Commonwealth is giving the world.