



CANADA

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## CONTENTS

Learning to be a Canadian.....	1
Highway of the "Voyageurs".....	3
Metal-Work Vocation Booklet.....	3
Special Service Force.....	4
Improved Fishery Inspection.....	4
Canada at IA-ECOSOC.....	4

Tax-Paid Cigarette Withdrawals.....	4
National ARDA Conference.....	5
Seaway Traffic.....	5
Emergency Health-Supply Meet.....	5
Canadian ICY Organ.....	5
Conference on Automation.....	6

## LEARNING TO BE A CANADIAN

*The following is a partial text of an address by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, on November 23 to the Canadian Club of Montreal:*

...The title is personal; it refers to me. Although I was born in this country over half a century ago, I am still learning to be a Canadian. The chances are I shall not complete my education before I die.

So far as I can observe, the nearly 20,000,000 other inhabitants of this country are attending the same school. We are all learning to be Canadians, whether we have recently immigrated, whether we are the sons and daughters of immigrants, or whether our ancestors came to New France or were United Empire Loyalists. And we are all teaching one another.

### CANADIAN PENCHANT FOR INTROSPECTION

I venture to say that the citizens of no other country spend so much time in self-examination. We love introspection. We delight in parading our self-doubts and our confusions not only before ourselves but before the world....

We talk about the search for national identity. It seems to me that we should make the assumption that we have a national identity, even if we cannot find the words to define it. Englishmen do not seem to find it necessary to explain themselves, or Frenchmen, or Americans, or Australians, or Swiss. They are what they are; we are what we are; and I see no reason to think that we suffer by comparison....

Other countries have more than one official language, but how many are blessed, as we are, with

two of the great universal languages of the Western world — French and English? To know both of these languages is an invaluable asset in this rapidly contracting world. To live in a country where both languages are not only taught but spoken should be considered a great privilege, not a hardship....

### A LAND WHERE REASON CAN PREVAIL

The people of Canada are in fact a remarkably compatible group in terms of race, colour, language and culture. They should be able to get along with one another if any people can. Moreover, while our history lacks drama in the sense that it is not filled with accounts of repression, bloody civil war and insurrection, it is for that very reason free from the remembrances that embitter the politics of so many countries. Canada is the prime example in the modern world of peaceful evolution from colony to full independence and political freedom.

Nor is any outside power seeking to exacerbate our internal differences for its own purposes. Britain does not champion the cause of "les anglais" or France the cause of French-Canadians. The United States has abandoned its doctrine of "Manifest Destiny" in favour of the "Good-Neighbour Policy". We are being left strictly alone to solve our own problems as we see fit. Even the Communists find disappointingly little with which to foment internal trouble and seem to have abandoned us to our fate — for which we are truly grateful.

In short, we live in a land where reason has every opportunity to prevail in the conduct of our affairs. We are not cursed by a history of slavery or

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