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A Question For All Canadian Readers and Homes

(By "Canada First")

This contribution by a young Canadian speaks for itself. If the Editor of the British Columbia Monthly could arrange it, he would have this article published in every Canadian periodical and newspaper, and also broadcasted every day from every radio centre in Canada.

As it is, we invite every newspaper, and every radio centre controller receiving a marked magazine containing the article, to co-operate with us in giving publicity

to this much-needed message to Canadians and Canadian homes.

We also suggest that school teachers and clergy emphasize this subject as occasion offers.

Whatever our different ideas of politics and government, we have a common aim in wishing to be good Canadians first, and this Editor believes most Canadians—as Advertisers and Readers—have ONLY TO KNOW THE FACTS, to be ready to give precedence to Canadian magazines and literature.—[Ed. B. C. M.]

Are we to have a National Literature?

What we read undoubtedly has much to do with what, and how, we think. And also, undoubtedly, what the nation reads has much to do with its trend of thought. It is clear, then, that a national literature is essential if we are to have a national spirit; if we are to have a nation united in thought and action; a nation internally prosperous and contented and externally admired and respected.

A national literature would accomplish much in this direction. Canadian literature is particularly and peculiarly our own. It is about our affairs—our trading, our shipping, our commerce. It is a medium through which our statesmen may express their opinions and contentions; a medium of expression for our literary genius; and, last but not least, it is an advertising medium for our Canadian manufacturers to present the merit of their goods. Nation-wide advertising of Canadian goods means added prosperity for Canada, because it will increase the demand for home products. That means better markets for our farmer and fruit grower. Naturally the more raw material there is consumed, the more national development; and national development means more work for Canadian workmen. Now, I feel quite confident that *if the people of Canada could be made to realize how vitally important to Canada's growth a national literature is, it would receive the whole-hearted support of every loyal, right-thinking Canadian citizen.*

But such is not the case. Last year we spent over twelve million dollars on American literature, and less than half a million on our own. With this colossal amount of foreign literature

came four billion pages of American advertising, which naturally created a tremendous demand on the Canadian market for American goods. We spent over one million five hundred thousand dollars on canned goods alone, despite the fact that practically all the canned goods we need are manufactured right here in Canada. Furthermore, our literary geniuses were forced either to go to the States, or at least to send their work to the States to get the proper remuneration for it. Also, reading American magazines, we read about the glory and the greatness of the United States. We were shown the world from Uncle Sam's point of view, instead of our own. What a terrific indictment all this is against our loyalty as citizens of Canada. That twelve million dollars spent on American literature is

COMPLETELY LOST TO CANADA

But the chief harm of this foreign literature is its propaganda for American goods and American ideals.

But, Mr. Average Citizen counters: Canada has no worth-while magazines, and, he adds, with a self-complacent air, just as soon as they get as good magazines as the United States I will buy them. This seems to be as far as his reasoning goes. Of course, Uncle Sam has better magazines than we have. And why? Simply because they have a much wider circulation. The United States has one hundred and ten million people, against our nine million. Naturally their periodicals have a wider circulation. *In order to place our magazines on the same plane with Uncle Sam's periodicals we must have the support of every loyal Canadian citizen.*

A few courageous publishers are

attempting to build up worth-while periodicals which will perform a real community service. Considering the vast importance to the ultimate progress of Canada of these beginnings of a national literature, we cannot argue too strongly for their support. Whether they live or die, whether we have a national literature or not, depends upon the people of Canada themselves.

The Dominion Government is debating a measure to tax all American periodicals. But this is merely a partial cure. There is only one effective remedy; and that *remedy lies with the Canadian people themselves.* If every Canadian can somehow be made to realize that he or she is an integral part of Canada, and as such has a definite duty towards all things which contribute to Canada's welfare, then we will see the dawn of a new era; an era of development and prosperity, in which Canada will take her rightful place among the nations of the world.

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