

Americans, have forgotten that a man named Rensselaer was one of your leaders in that war. In this twentieth century, even the possibility of conflict between your country and ours has receded from the minds of both our peoples. That has not always been so. The scattered British colonies which were united to form the Canadian nation in 1867 were brought together, in large part, to strengthen their defences against possible aggression from the United States. That attitude was a quite natural outcome of our earlier history. In the background was the memory of two centuries of frequent wars and continuous threats of war.

I have already suggested that the establishment of a satisfactory relationship between great nations and their less-powerful neighbours is one of the most acute problems of our times. It is a commonplace to say that, in this respect, the attitude of the United States towards Canada has set an example to the world. Certainly Canada has not fallen under your domination and equally certainly you have not threatened our separate existence as a nation. Although your country is more powerful than it has ever been, the Canadian nation today is more securely independent and self-reliant than we have ever been. But it would, I believe, be a mistake to think that the good relations between the United States and Canada are the inevitable result of circumstances; or that they do not need to be cherished, if they are to persist.

Great powers, like other nations, are concerned about their own external security. You, in the United States, naturally want to be assured that your security, and your interests as a world power, will not be prejudiced by the policies or actions of Canada. Your border marches with ours for 5,526.6 miles. I give you the figure which is given in the Canada Year Book. The openness of this border is a source of great convenience, but it might also be a source of great worry and danger. At least two of the historic approaches to the North American continent, Hudson Bay and the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, are approaches through Canada.

Those who lived in Troy and along your Hudson valley during the first two centuries after the original settlement knew all too well what it meant, in terms of insecurity and danger, to have the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain in unfriendly hands. I am sure you who live in Troy today are glad to take it for granted that the lower St. Lawrence is going to remain in friendly hands.

The present understanding between Canada and the United States for the maintenance of our mutual security is based upon an exchange of pledges made in 1938 by the late President Roosevelt and by my predecessor, Mr. Mackenzie King. The Ogdenburg Agreement of 1940 for the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, the Hyde Park Declaration of 1941, and the agreed statements on defence by your President and our Prime Minister of February 12, 1947, were based upon this common recognition of mutual responsibility for the defence of the whole continent. The agreed statement by President Truman and Mr. Mackenzie King declared that "in the interests of efficiency and economy, each government has decided that its national defence establishment shall, to the extent authorized by law, continue to collaborate for peacetime joint security purposes." One of the principles of collaboration laid down in this statement of common policy is the encouragement of common designs and standards in arms, equipment, organization, methods of training and new developments."