

What we in Canada have to overcome in the United States is more often indifference than hostility. Ironically, that is because, for the past century, Canada and the United States have usually been friends and allies. Why should you worry about the good guys up North when you are feeling threatened by more difficult or more interesting people a half-hemisphere away? Why deal with half the continent when you have an Island to worry about?

We are all prisoners of history.

But that sort of attitude makes it possible, for example, for a story in the Washington Post that was carried in the International Herald Tribune, to explain that Canadian media referred to runner Ben Johnson as a "Jamaican-Canadian". That was offered as proof that he is not fully accepted in this country. The idea that people may refer to themselves by both their original and their Canadian nationalities -- an idea that is very much a part of how we see ourselves in this country -- doesn't jibe with the American melting pot concept and, therefore, it is often simply overlooked.

But it is not only Americans who do not know Canada. Many of our own people - many of our own institutions - are out of touch with what this nation is becoming, not to mention what it can become. For every Texan who thinks we live in Igloos, there is a Torontonion who doesn't know how much St. John, New Brunswick, has been transformed in the last ten years. There is a British Columbian who has no idea that eight per cent of the people in Metropolitan Toronto speak Italian as their mother tongue, nearly five per cent speak Chinese as their mother tongue, and nearly three per cent speak Portuguese as their mother tongue.

We have out-dated images of ourselves in this country. Many Canadians would be surprised to learn that this country, the people here, are world leaders in communications -- as we have always had to be, given the realities of our geography and climate. We are investors -- investors reaching out from the perspective of somebody else -- we Canadians are foreign investors to the tune of \$54.2 billion at the end of last year.