

Only 250 came**Seminar explores Canada-U.S. relations**

Speakers Armstrong, Michener, and Enders at seminars on Canada-American relations, at the Prince Hotel.

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Last Tuesday, the Prince Hotel played host to a number of seminars concerning the state of relations between Canada and the United States. The series, presented by the Conference Board of Canada, called upon a number of guest speakers from both the diplomatic and financial sectors of both countries. The aim of the conference, in the words of Board Chairman, Bob De Corter, "was to provide a forum of public discussion on issues facing the two countries".

The plenary session entitled 'Canada-US relations in perspective' offered an overview of the situation as it stands today. The session, chaired by the Rt. Honorable Ronald D. Michener, included as speakers, Willis Armstrong (Consultant to the International Chamber of Commerce), Thomas Enders (US ambassador to Canada), J.H. Warren (Canadian ambassador to the US), and R.M. MacIntosh (Canadian co-chairman of the Canadian-American committee, and executive vice president of the Bank of Nova Scotia).

Following the open remarks by Michener, was the address by Armstrong, referring to Canada's choice of considering a third option (the policy of pursuing "a comprehensive, long-term strategy to develop and strengthen the Canadian economy and other aspects of national life and in the process, to reduce the present Canadian vulnerability"), he said that "the essential facts of interdependence in economics and relative similarity of interdependence in economics and relative similarity or identity of proclaimed or actual interests in the world are well established," and that in reality, the only notable option of foreign affairs are in minor and unimportant issues.

"The name of the game," said Armstrong, "is the reality of the dealing with the world as it is and of trying to make it a bit better for ourselves and others. Reality means taking care of one's national interests in an enlightened and broad-minded fashion".

Thomas Enders, whose towering features commanded immediate attention was the session's second speaker. Acknowledging that Canadian-US relations are those of 'best friends' and 'non-negotiable'. He did illustrate that there are concerns generated by difference in size.

PUSHED AROUND

"Not only Canadians feel like they are being pushed around," said Enders.

"However, it is a regular experience for me to be accused by Congress of being taken to the cleaners by Canadians." He cited American concern that Canadians possibly escape "common responsibilities" under the banner of being "special" or claiming that "Canada's weight is too small to make a difference". He did add, however, after listing other areas of concern, that "the reactions generated by our differences often seem all out of proportion to the objective scope of the problem."

Seeing a need for a precise definition of Continentalism, Enders defined it as "the idea that one should make decisions on investments, jobs, resources, water and so forth, as if the border wasn't there, letting benefits

and costs be distributed by private decisions without reference to national interest." Admitting that "Continentalism is not a very current doctrine in U.S. politics," he did add that "after all we have the same need you have to think in terms of National Interest."

MISUNDERSTOOD

Ambassador Warren, in his text, aberrated little from the contemporary Canadian position of "asserting its own personality internationally". He reiterated the fact that "most of Canada still seeks further industrial development and that the welcome mat remains out for sound projects likely to benefit both the investor and the host country." He did point out that Canadian institutions are often misunderstood by Americans and have troubles understanding, for example that "Canadian provinces have a decisive say with respect to the development and taxation of natural resources lying within their borders."

Warren foresaw no major changes resulting from the new Carter Administration, and added that "the relationship will still be kept in good repair, because it has to be! Too much is at stake for too many people on both sides of the border for it to be otherwise."

The morning seminar concluded with Mr. MacIntosh's "Syntheses of the issues". His text, an essay complete with footnotes, added little insight into the matter. The only point on which he took issue was that "the announcement of the demise of the special relationship between Canada and the U.S. was 'premature'."

GORILLA'S TOES

Afternoon sessions added a number of points to those already discussed. In "The Economic Partnership", C.E. Ritchie (President, Bank of Nova Scotia) chaired a seminar in which A.C. Tomlinson (Chairman, First Boston Corp.) said that, "Canada can ill afford, in its own interest, to continue the national obsession with 'jumping on the toes of the gorilla'," and that, "unless you are financially self-sufficient, you better be nice to your banker."

"Resource Sharing", another seminar, was chaired by G.D. Clark (Chairman & President, RCA). It featured speakers from the Department of Energy, the Science Council of Canada, and the Canadian Chairman of the International Joint Commission, Maxwell Cohen.

A fourth session, "Communication and the Two Societies", was chaired by St. Clair Balfour, Chairman of Southam Press. During this seminar, presentations were made by the Hon. Jeanne Sauvé, Minister, Dept. of Communications, and Lynn R. Williams, Director of District Six, United Steelworkers of America.

For all intents and purposes, the Conference had to be viewed as a failure. As later confirmed by subsequent Excalibur interviews, few people in attendance felt they had learned much as a result of the conference. The morning speakers presented their points well, but added no new dimensions of insight into Canadian-American relations. Although 25,000 invitations were sent out, a spokesman for the Conference Board estimated attendance at only 200 to 250 people. Those in attendance were almost entirely from the business or government sector, which was understandable, considering the only mass advertising was mainly



American Ambassador Thomas Enders

directed at the diplomats. Mr. De Corter said, however, that this was because of limited funds, and not because they were trying to attract an audience that was limited in its scope.

DISTURBING COVERAGE

Another disturbing feature of the day was the media coverage. The majority of the press who were covering the seminar on "Communication and the Two Societies" never returned from the coffee break which was offered midway through the session. In fact, numerous members of the electronic and print media had their stories completed prior to the conclusion of the seminar. This was particularly disturbing not only because of the irresponsibility of the action but because if the people of the press were not interested enough to remain, then any discussion on Canadian Communication would be futile.

Tuesday's events were indeed unfortunate. The Conference Board of Canada is a non-profit organization consisting of active members who are extremely devoted to their work. They could not be held at fault for the sparse attendance, nor for the dull content material of some of the speakers. Due to limited funds, they were extremely limited in what they could do. Knowing that such a board exists, however, one was able to leave the Prince Hotel Tuesday with a ray of hope still left that a solution to this ever-increasing problem may one day be reached.



Panel discussion of "Communication and the Two Societies".