

I now wish to turn briefly to some matters concerning the relations between Canada and the United States. At one stage in our history not so very long ago it could be maintained with some justice that there was a contradiction between Canadian membership in the British Commonwealth of Nations and very close and friendly relations with the United States. When the United States and the United Kingdom have pulled in opposite directions, we Canadians have tended to suffer from a split personality, because our interests and sympathies were divided. When they pull together, we live a lot more easily. They are pulling together now, and seem likely to continue to do so, no matter what political changes there may be in either country.

When Canadians are inclined to be critical of the United States, it is well for them to remember that most smaller countries next door to very great powers have had a rough time. Reflect on what has happened in the course of this century to Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Rumania, Finland and many others. Switzerland and Sweden are the only small countries of Europe outside the Iberian Peninsula which have not been overrun once or more times since 1914 by a powerful neighbour. Can we Canadians doubt that we are fortunate to have the United States as our one great neighbour? We have, of course, our problems, our irritations, our resentments, in our dealings with the United States, but how different they are in quality from those which afflict the small nations of Europe and Asia!

One of our complaints, and a reasonable one, is that not enough is known about Canada in the United States. In my experience most Americans when they think about Canada, which they do not do very often, appear to have a high regard for their northern neighbour. While there is a lot of misunderstanding and misconception, only rarely does one come across criticism or complaint of the way in which we manage our affairs. The ignorance of Canada is not dangerous ignorance; but, of course, knowledge is to be preferred to ignorance. Every now and then somebody displays his ignorance by making a notable blunder; and there is a recurrent demand in Canada that something more should be done to tell the people of the United States about our record and achievements. I wish someone could devise a satisfactory method of doing this. There are 145 million people in the United States, and it is quite a job to educate them.

Anyone who has had much to do with the business of public relations abroad would agree that you certainly cannot please everybody and frequently seem to please nobody. I can illustrate from three articles which happened to reach my desk in the last fortnight. The first, in a Washington despatch to a Canadian weekly, said, among other things: "Working American newspaper men have complained to this reporter for several years that Canadian Government public relations or informational facilities are probably the worst in the United States capital. There is literally a hunger for news from Canada in American publications". The second, in a Canadian monthly, was not so restrained in language, and the following sentence does not do full justice to its emphasis, "All this adds up to the fact that our public relations in Washington stink, and that the Ambassador must bear his share". The third was a long complaint in a despatch to a very well known newspaper in the United States that the Canadian Government was trying to "shame Congress into approving the Marshall Plan" by emphasizing the magnitude of the financial aid given by Canada since the war to the United Kingdom and Western European countries. This article asserts: "The Canadian Embassy in Washington is a fountainhead of propaganda which compares American and Canadian aid programs to America's 'disadvantage'". I find it a little hard to understand how one can be a "fountainhead of propaganda" and at the same time "utterly useless" in this respect, as one of the Canadian critics stated.

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