

It would seem almost too obvious to mention that the Crown has made a strong contribution to the development of Canadian unity. But if I were to omit a reference to the Crown I would be neglecting an important force in Canada's growth to adult nationhood. We Canadians have a sense of national loyalty, but because we are of different racial origins and have different cultural backgrounds, and because our centres of population are scattered we also have strong local loyalties.

The interesting and sometimes disconcerting variety we find in provincial politics I think bears this out.

This rich diversity of local loyalties is blended together in a common loyalty to the Crown, a loyalty which was dramatically and enthusiastically demonstrated by the reception given to our Royal visitors a year ago by Canadian citizens of all provinces and of all ethnic origins.

Sometimes I feel that our American friends envy the symbol of unity that we have in the Crown, for whenever Canada is honoured with a Royal visit they feel entitled to snare in it as sort of ex officio members of the Commonwealth. Such a thought, of course, if carried too far, would be dangerous and I don't want to be placed in the embarrassing position of having offered the United States an opportunity to come into Confederation so that they too might directly enjoy the advantages of constitutional monarchy - or even of a dollar stronger than their own.

While all these factors have been important ones in our development into full nationhood, one of the most important of all, and what does most to make the Canadian nation different from others, is the bilingual and bi-cultural partnership in this nation of ours. If that partnership had not been cemented by the sincere efforts of the great majority of Canadians to achieve mutual understanding and by their willingness to co-operate in solving the major problems that have faced our country, then, we could scarcely apply the term "adult" to our nation.

The men who founded our nation did so on one principle that stands out above all others, the principle that the new nation should enable the English-speaking and French-speaking partners to keep their essential characteristics, their religion, their language, their culture. This they saw as the keystone of our national unity.....

The example set by the Canadian Clubs in 1892 in fostering better relations between the two members of our national partnership have had so many imitators whose efforts to obtain greater unity have been successful that it can now be truthfully said that Canada merits that definition of a nation given in St. Augustine's "The City of God" - "A nation is an association of reasonable beings united in a peaceful sharing of the things they cherish....."

I said earlier that I believe that Laurier's famous prophecy is on the verge of being fulfilled, that Canada stands with the key to the front door of the century in her hand. And I have spent several minutes in describing the processes and elements that have been used in the forging of that key.