

A good many years ago it was my privilege to be seated alongside of Lord Dunedin at a dinner which was followed by a lot of speeches. After listening to several of them, His Lordship turned to me and said: "Young man when you get to be my age" - he was then over 80 - "you will realize that it is unwise for anyone to attempt to make a speech unless he really has something to say. And after he has said it, he should sit down."

I told Mr. Pearson last November that I did not know anything new or different which needed to be said about Canadian-American relations at that time. He replied that some question was bound to arise which would provide me with a suitable topic.

Well, I accepted his forecast and your President's invitation. But when I sat down the other evening to prepare some notes for what I might say to you, I realized that Mr. Pearson had been wrong. Perhaps fortunately for both countries, nothing special has developed in the relations between Canada and the United States significant enough to be made the theme of a speech.

The result is I have nothing new to talk to you about. The best I can do is to attempt to recall some generalities which are always important in Canada's relations with this country and more particularly in the relations of both these North American nations with the rest of the world.

The first essential factor in our good relations is our mutual respect for each other, and our genuine desire not only to be fair to each other in fact, but to have that fairness obvious and indisputable. In our day-to-day individual dealings with each other it is not difficult to achieve fairness and to have that fairness accepted as a matter of course. But the smooth course of these day-to-day individual dealings is dependent upon peace on this continent. And peace on this continent now depends upon much more than the good relations between the people of the United States and the people of Canada.

During the whole of the last century and even the first years of this one, we, in the new world, felt little concern over what went on in other continents. Even when war broke out in Europe in 1914 there were many who felt that though Canada might have been drawn in as a colony of a great world power, the United States could remain aloof.

That turned out to be impossible.

Our side won, but the cost of victory in human lives, in human suffering and in material wealth even on this side of the Atlantic, was immense. The cost was great not only while the war lasted, but also in its after-effects, during the terrible years of the thirties.

For a time after 1918 everyone hoped that men had had enough of war and that the world might look forward to an era of peace. But, as the hope of peace faded in the decade of the thirties, a great many people in the United States turned again towards the traditional new world policy of isolation. And many of our people in Canada went a long way with our North American neighbours on the same road.