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“OF THINGS TO COME”

*A Citizens' Forum on Canada in the
Post-war World*

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Canadians - World Citizens

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Canadians - World Citizens

Canadians often say "What's the Moscow Conference or the Atlantic Charter got to do with us? Why get so steamed up about Europe and Asia? What happens over there is none of our business. We've got enough on our hands right here in Canada. We're Canadians—we want to know about Canada."

There's some point in what they say. First and foremost our business is to clean up the blots in our own country. As Canadians, our first responsibility is obviously in Canada, not in Europe or Asia.

But that is only half the story. Let's look at the facts. At this minute thousands of Canadians are stationed in England. Thousands of others have been fighting in Italy. Our fliers have led some of the most daring actions over Germany. The men of the Navy have been in the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Mediterranean and the Arctic. Many Canadian lads were captured at Hong Kong. Doesn't this mean that we *are* mixed up in what is happening all over the world?

Now let us see in what ways Canadians are world citizens, how the future of our country will be affected by what happens in other continents, how what we do will affect the people of other lands.

OUR GEOGRAPHY

First let us look at our place on the map. On our southern border is the U.S.A., probably the richest power in the world. To the east is the St. Lawrence basin opening Canada to the Atlantic—which connects us with the British Isles, Europe, South America, and South Africa. In the west we have ports on the great Pacific, which connects us with the expanding Orient. And in recent years a fourth frontier has been opened up by air transport. We face the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics across the North Pole. This spring when a military mission wanted to come to Canada from the U.S.S.R., it flew directly from one country to the other—right across the Arctic. With Europe also, we have close air connections. Government officials, military personnel, diplomatic visitors, hop over night between here and the British Isles. It is the same with the Orient: on his way back from Chungking to New York, Wendell Willkie had to stop off in Edmonton. Obviously, many of the great commercial air routes of the future will be across Canadian soil. Thus, in the age of modern invention, we cannot

think of ourselves as far removed from Europe, South America, or Asia.

After flying around the world, a trip of 31,000 miles, Willkie wrote:

"There are no distant points in the world any longer. I learned by this trip that the myriad millions of human beings in the Far East are as close to us as Los Angeles is to New York by the fastest trains. Our thinking in the future must be world-wide."

SECURITY

This geographic dependence on the rest of the world has forced us to change our attitude towards our security from attack. Twice in twenty-five years we have gone to war—we have sent our troops to fight in Europe. Now we have troops in the East. Though there may have been other reasons such as loyalty to Britain, hatred of tyranny and aggression that persuaded us to go to war in 1939, the cold hard fact was that we knew we were menaced by the aggressor nations. As the Canadian Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, said:

"Let Europe come completely under Nazi domination and Asia under the domination of Japan and the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific will in no way serve to isolate the countries of North and South America. To a victorious enemy these great oceans would prove no barrier against invasion."

OUR TRADE

But other things than geography or security involve us with the rest of the world. Our whole economy is part of the world economy. Many of us depend for our livelihood on selling our products to other parts of the world; many of the things we use are sent to us from abroad. Where would the prairie provinces be if they couldn't sell their wheat on the world markets? Markets are equally needed for many of our other resources as well, our pulp and paper products, our fisheries, our hog production, our minerals. Before the war we were the fourth largest exporting nation in the world and the second largest in proportion to our total national income. Without a world market we could never have achieved even the standard of living we did.

The Rowell-Sirois Commission which had many of the best experts in Canada working for it, reports the situation in these words:

"It is only by a role in international business that Canada can maintain anything near her present standard of living and can support the great capital investment which has been made to equip her for this role. Because Canada is one of the least self-supporting countries in the world her prosperity and her very existence depend on making the most of her own specialized resources and on trading them as advantageously as possible for her other requirements. Her success will depend not only on her own skill and efforts but also on the continuation of an international and integrated system of trade and finance."

During the Depression A good example of how we depend on world markets is what happened to us in the depression. In the years after 1929 the insecurity, selfishness and suspicion produced in great part by the last war, caught up with the world. Each nation tried to protect itself against others by cutting off its imports from other nations. The result was, of course, that between 1929 and 1931 the volume of world trade fell 40%. How did this affect us in Canada? We were particularly hard hit. Every Canadian who lived through the depression will remember what it meant. The price of wheat, our chief export commodity, fell from 1.08 to 35 cents a bushel. It doesn't take much figuring to see what that did to the western farmer. And the effect was of course not limited to one section of the country. The whole national income dropped lower and lower. Teachers and doctors, truck-drivers and ministers, farmers and shopkeepers earned less. The productive machinery of the country had been thrown completely out of gear by the loss of the world markets. This is not to argue that Canada could not have done much to make the effect of the depression less hard for its citizens—but it is a fact, to quote the Rowell-Sirois Report once again, that "it was the sharp fall in export prices which pushed Canada down the incline of the depression". Events in the outside world did much to make deadly for Canadians those years after 1929.

Now let us examine what international associations we have joined in the past, and what new ones we have developed through this war. Our connections with the world have in the past been particularly important in certain ways. In the new world, we will keep many of the old relationships and develop new ones.

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

Since the day that Wolfe defeated Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham, we have been a member of the British Empire. It was the organization that helped us maintain our security. Through it, the small and struggling colony that we were then, had a chance to survive. For if any other power got tough we always had the weight of the Empire behind us. Since the middle of the last century we have moved gradually towards complete independence within the Empire, so that today we remain in the British Empire and Commonwealth completely of our own free will. Indeed after 1931 when our independence was recognized by the Statute of Westminster, there were many who believed that we should soon cease to have any connection with the Commonwealth. So far the facts have proved them wrong. In September 1939, when Great Britain went to war, Canada went beside her as a freely co-operating partner. She could have stayed neutral like Eire, another Dominion, but she went to war, the only North or South American country that did. From the beginning of the war our cooperation with the Commonwealth has been of great importance not only for ourselves but for the rest of the world. When from June 1940 to June 1941 Great Britain was the only great power fighting Hitler, Canada was her chief ally. Indeed, our aid did much to keep Britain in the war.

RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.A.

Canadian life is closely bound up with the United States. Whatever else the future may bring us, it is certain that much of our destiny will be interwoven with that of the 130 million Americans. Before the war over 40% of our exports went there, and we got from her over 60% of our imports. Thousands of Americans and Canadians crossed and recrossed the border, uniting the two countries in friendship. Anything else but friendship is indeed unthinkable. In the century and a quarter since we last went to war against each other, we have lived together without armed conflict. We have had, without doubt, many quarrels and disagreements. But to settle them we have never resorted to war.

Since the rises of the aggressor nations in Europe and Asia, Canada and the U.S.A. have come closer and closer together. In 1938 when war seemed about to break out President Roosevelt affirmed on a visit to this country that the U.S.A. would let no foreign country attack our soil. The Ogdensburg Agreement of 1941 arranged for a Joint Defence Board. This has been followed by Joint Committees on most phases of the two countries' war effort. Today as mutual members of the United Nations, the two countries work closely in harmony.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE

From the foundation of the League of Nations in 1919 Canada was a member. That organization, formed so that world problems could be settled by arbitration rather than by force, accomplished much in its first years to eliminate causes of international friction and bad will. By its representatives in the Council and the Assembly, and by its members on the permanent staff, Canada can take its share in the credit for this. However, we were not always a willing co-operator. After the last war we opposed such things as an attempted settlement of the raw materials question. Later when it came to the League attempting a showdown with the rising aggressive powers in Asia and Europe, Canada was not willing to back any effective action. After Japan had invaded Manchuria in 1931, Canada's delegate at the League made a speech sympathizing with the invader. In 1935 when Italy attacked Abyssinia, the Canadian government refused to support the League in preventing this aggressor from getting oil. The Prime Minister stated in 1937 that part of Canada's policy towards the world was that she "was under no obligation to participate in the military or economic sanctions of the League". It seems evident then we were willing to be a member of an international organization, but we

were not willing to bear the responsibilities that would make the organization effective. We thought limited co-operation was enough.

Along with our membership in the League, we participated in the International Labour office and subsidiary committees of the League that accomplished a good deal in a practical way by fighting the drug trade and white slave racket, by investigating labour conditions and private armament industry. Though less publicized, they proved the effectiveness of international action against worldwide evils.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED NATIONS

In this war we have become a member of a new body whose membership covers all corners of the globe. The United Nations are the most powerful international body of which we have ever been a member. In January 1942 we were one of the initial signers of the Declaration whereby many governments united in their support of the Atlantic Charter and pledged the fullest co-operation in the defeat of Hitlerism. Today we have the fifth largest war effort of the United Nations (next only to that of the four great powers—the United States, the United Kingdom, the U.S.S.R. and China), and we are the fourth largest producer. The fact that a recent United Nations Conference on strategy was held at Quebec was a recognition by the rest of the world of the part our forces have played and are playing in the defeat of the Axis—a real honour for Canadians.

But Canada has played her part in the United Nations not only in the work of victory, but in the work of shaping the peace. We signed the joint declaration of January 1942 on the punishment of war criminals. In 1942 we signed a wheat agreement pledging mutual co-operation with the other leading wheat producing countries of the world. In 1943 we have taken part in three United Nations Conferences, one on refugees, the other on the problems of food, and the third on relief and rehabilitation. A Canadian, L. A. Pearson, was made head of the United Nations Commission of Food and Agriculture. When he was appointed he said:

"The delegates faced the long-term problem of permanent freedom from want, not nationally but as a problem requiring international action. They dealt with the question of replacing international anarchy by internal order in the field of agricultural production, distribution and consumption." When a member of Canadian officialdom says that, it shows how we are facing our problems not only as Canadians—but as members of the free world.

To conclude then, it seems that we are dependent on what happens in all continents. By now, most Canadians should agree that the refusal of England to surrender in June 1940 was in fact protecting us. The fight of the Russians at Stalingrad in 1942 was in truth a shield for us. In the economic sphere the tariffs put up by Americans and Europeans against our goods in the early 1930's affected the livelihood of thousands of Canadians. The other side of the picture is that what we do affects the rest of the world. The fact that there was a well-equipped Canadian division in England in 1940 was, as Winston Churchill has said, a vital factor in the ability of the free world to survive. Our policy of tariff restriction carried out at Ottawa in 1932 affected many businesses in other lands. We have the choice then: we may co-operate in world arrangements or we may not. But we should recognize that whether we do or whether we do not, events in the rest of the world are still going to affect our lives at every turn. We are part of one world.

As President Roosevelt said to Canadians in 1938 and repeated on his visit to Ottawa in August of this year, 1943:

"We in the Americas are no longer a far away continent to which the eddies of controversy beyond the seas, could bring no interests or no harm. The vast amount of our resources, the extent of our commerce, and the strength of our men have made us vital factors in world peace, whether we choose it or not."

With this in mind we are going to discuss in more detail during the next few evenings what part Canada should play in the new world that is being born. Next Tuesday we will discuss Canada in the British Commonwealth, and following that such subjects as our relations with other countries, our trade with the world. During these discussions we hope to bear in mind that it is hardly possible to draw a distinction between our international relations and our affairs at home. The state of employment in Canada will be affected by our trade with the world and on the other side of the picture, our role in world affairs will depend to a great extent on whether we can solve our problems at home.

MORE INFORMATION

Canada and the World Tomorrow, Opportunity and responsibility, by W. L. Morton. Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1943. Deals with the practical and immediate problems.

Canada and the United Nations: W. E. C. Harrison, and A. N. Reid. Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1942. Good, if slightly out of date.

Canada—after the War: ed. by A. Brady and F. R. Scott. Macmillan's, 1943. Several chapters on Canada's role in the world written from the academic approach.

Canada and the Building of Peace: Grant Dexter. Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1943. A cautious journalist looks at Canada's international role.

Reflections on the Revolution of our Time: H. Laski. Viking Press, 1943. A left-wing interpretation of what is happening in the world.

Canada in a Hungry World: Andrew Stewart. Behind the Headlines Series. *The Debates of the Canadian House of Commons* for July 9th and 12th, 1943. These debates are the most recent discussions by our parliamentarians of our foreign policy. Obtainable from the King's Printer.

Post War Problems—A Reading List. A select bibliography on post-war settlement and reconstruction, by R. Flenley. Canadian Institute of International Affairs, April, 1943. 25c.

FILMS

WAR FOR MEN'S MINDS. The various political doctrines today compete for the support of the men and nations. This film describes the war on information and propaganda front and hope for the future that is possible through the co-operation of the United Nations. (Running time—20 minutes.)

BATTLE OF THE HARVESTS. The film shows the work of the Canadian farmer during wartime is related intimately to the battle of food in the world as a whole. (Running time—18 minutes.)

REPORT QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did the aggressor nations threaten the security of Canada in this war?
2. What are the main factors involving Canada in world affairs?
3. Which of our relationships in the rest of the world are going to be most important to Canadians in the future?
 1. our membership in the British Commonwealth
 2. our friendship with the U.S.A.
 3. our membership in the United Nations or what?

SEND YOUR ANSWERS TO YOUR PROVINCIAL OFFICE

THINGS TO DO

Find out exactly what commitments Canada has undertaken as to her role in the post-war world, whether as a member of the United Nations or in some other capacity. It should be possible to obtain this information by writing to the Dept. of External Affairs, Ottawa, or to the Wartime Information Board, Ottawa. Discuss these commitments and decide whether they are what you want. Discuss the ways in which your Citizens' Forum members, as citizens of Canada, can affect our government's policy on international affairs.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

1. What place will Canada hold in the air routes of the future?
2. "In the course of the present war we have seen Canada emerge from nationhood into a position generally recognized as that of a world power."
(the Prime Minister of Canada)

What are the factors that have brought about this change in our status?

3. What part will Canada be called upon to play in the feeding and rehabilitation of the devastated countries?
4. "The peace must mean a better standard of living for the common man not merely in the United States and England, but also in India, Russia, China, and Latin America—not merely in the United Nations but also in Germany, Italy, and Japan".
(Vice-President of the U.S.A.)

Do you think that should be one of our aims as world citizens and Canadians?

Next Week - - CANADA IN THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

