

Come On In, Canada

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH GUESSWORK as to the relationship of Canada and the United States in the event of a successful invasion of England by the Germans. The appointment by President Roosevelt of a commission to consult with a Canadian commission on a plan for the common defense of the two countries has taken the problem out of the field of speculation. The necessity or possibility of annexation by the United States is now a matter of immediate concern.

As every American schoolboy knows, the idea that Canada should be part of our country is as old as our country. There have been advocates of annexation on the Canadian side (when England attempted to intervene in Dominion commerce or customs), and the War of 1812 was largely instigated by land-hungry expansionists in the States. With the raising of high tariff barriers by both countries talk of annexation subsided, for protectionism is synonymous with isolationism.

Whatever happens to the fortunes of the British Empire, there is absolutely no necessity for political union between Canada and the United States. If we think in terms of people, not in nationalistic terms, there are good reasons for political separation.

In Quebec, for instance, where eighty percent of the population is French Catholic, application of our legal provision for non-religious public schools would result in violent resentment; the bi-lingual practice in that province, which England has wisely recognized, would jar our sensitivities. Cultural habits and traditions are emotional possessions which become endeared to a people, and friction is bound to occur when they are transgressed.

But an economic union with Canada, without which political union is unthinkable, is possible without interfering with the *mores* of either people, without constitutional changes, without contention. Since annexation necessarily involves statehood for Canadian provinces, and since statehood under our Constitution implies free trade, why not establish free trade without involving ourselves, or Canadians, in a difficult cultural rearrangement?

Why not? Because protectionists on both sides, very frequently the same persons or corporations, are opposed to an arrangement although it would help both countries. General Motors, for instance, would fight such a proposition. The corporation maintains factories on both sides of the border. Canadians pay a price for a car exactly equivalent to the price of the same car in the United States *plus*

the tariff. If the price were higher the car would be imported; if it were lower—but why should G. M. lose the gift profit?

American farmers who have to subsist on AAA gratuities would oppose it because they *think* competition from Canadian wheat would hurt them. Fifty percent of our farmers are tenants, and of the balance most are so heavily mortgaged that their condition is economically no better than that of tenants. Whatever advantage comes from protectionism accrues to the landowners and mortgage holders—banks and insurance companies. Farmers are laborers, and laborers always pay the tariff; they get no benefit from it. If Canadian land can produce better or cheaper wheat than ours can, not only will we as wheat eaters profit thereby, but Canadians will also be able to buy more of our products; and American farm boys, instead of being "surplus population," will produce things Canadians want.

The free exchange of goods and the free entry of salesmen and tourists will have the effect of breaking down false cultural barriers, will result in that free exchange of ideas which makes all people one. Eleven million Canadian customers mean eleven million friends. Friends have no difficulty in uniting for mutual defense when danger comes.