

How We Differ From Americans

By HUGH MacLENNAN

WHEN the difference between Canadians and Americans was first presented to me as the basis for an article, I believed it could not be done. For years I have known that Canadians and Americans, for all their surface resemblances, were different under the skin. Canadian mass - man differs noticeably from American mass-man. Yet the subject seemed too large and too vague to tie down with words, and the surface resemblances between Canada and the United States seemed too important.

Then one day not long ago I heard my neighbor's radio giving out a play-by-play account of the World Series, and I pictured men and boys in every city, town, village and farmhouse, in Canada as well as in the United States, sitting around their radios listening to that ball game.

An idea began to form and grow, so I walked down to the general store for cigarettes to think it over. On the counter there I found 11 American magazines. Then I went over to the butcher's to get some lamb chops and found his radio on, so I sat on the counter with the butcher and smoked cigarettes and listened to the ball game myself.

No, I decided, you can't write an article on a subject like this. If you try, you'll only bog down in generalities and sound like a college professor talking over the CBC on Sunday afternoon.

Then another idea occurred to me. Suppose McGill were playing Western for the football championship of Canada. How many American radios would be tuned in on that game? Suppose I had walked into a general store in a village in Illinois. Would I have seen a copy of Maclean's or Chatelaine on the stands?

Here, I realized, was the most startling difference between Canada and the United States. Canadians read so many American magazines, listen to so many American programs, see so many American movies, they can't help feeling themselves a part of American society. But they forget there is a twofold illusion in this feeling. The radio programs and Hollywood movies give only a surface report on American life, or else they deliberately distort it. Moreover, this whole traffic in surface information runs south to north. Americans generally know nothing important about Canada, and care less.

When I reached home I decided that the job could be done, and that there was only one safe way to do it. I would tell about my own relations with Americans, and how I, personally, learned I was a Canadian. Such an approach will never qualify for a textbook on international relations, but it seems to me the only honest approach there is for a subject like this. In human affairs there is no absolute truth. Mainly, there is what a man finds out for himself, and this is colored by his own personality and experience, it is transmuted by himself, it is shifted within himself whether he knows it consciously or not. I find I can't talk about the differences between Americans and Canadians without talking a good deal about myself.

In 1932, a few days after returning from Oxford, I walked out to my old university in my home

town to apply for a job. A vacancy had just been announced in my field of work, and in 1932 a new job of any kind was as rare as a snowball in August. This opening seemed to me one of those lucky chances which come rarely in life. My professors at the university must have had a fair opinion of my capacities, for it had largely been their recommendations which had sent me to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar.

But after talking for a few minutes with the professor who was now the head of my old department, I slowly became aware that he wished I had not come to see him.

Finally, he said: "You can apply for this job if you want to, but I may as well be frank. You won't get it."

I asked him why.

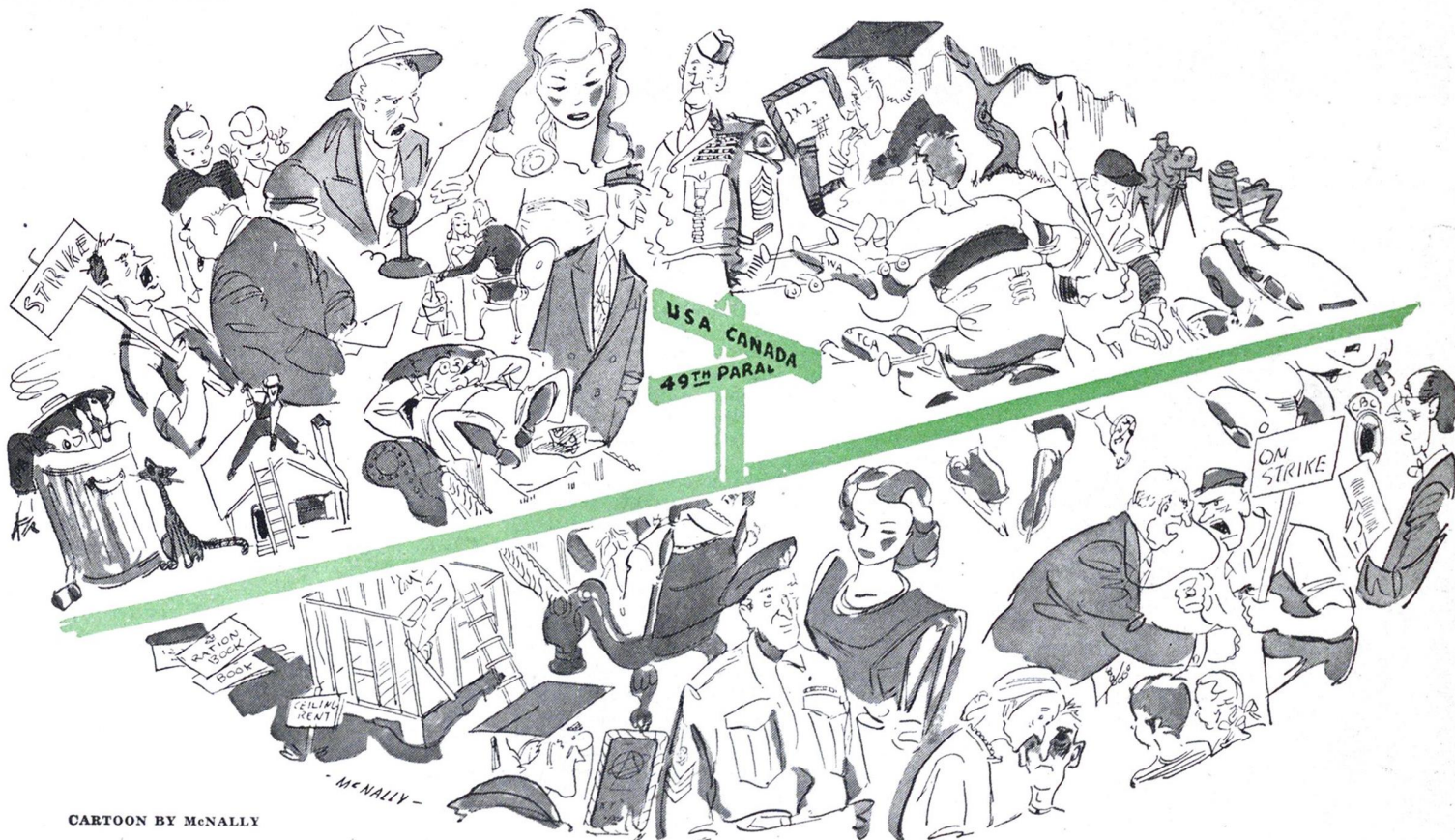
"An Englishman has sent in his application."

I said nothing. There had been plenty of Englishmen at Oxford far more brilliant than I, and I would have been the first to admit it.

The professor then gave me the man's name and added, as a sort of afterthought, the class he had got in his Oxford schools. I have never had a poker face, and in those days my face was open to the whole world. The professor smiled, for both he and I knew that the Englishman's class was exactly the same as my own. If academic qualifications were

Continued on page 49

A distinguished novelist explores the gulf that sets Canadian apart from American—a gulf he finds narrow but deep



CARTOON BY McNALLY

How We Differ From Americans

Continued from page 9

what counted, we were dead equals.

To this day I don't know whether the professor's next remark was intended as irony, or whether it was merely the statement of a truth he thought I should accept as self-evident.

"After all, you're a Canadian and he's an Englishman. It makes a difference."

It was one of those arterial sentences. It went from my brain right through me till I felt it in the back of my legs.

The professor added, with sincere kindness: "You'd better drop the idea of teaching in Canada and go down to the States. A Canadian can always get a job there."

So, I thought, an old Tory in 19th century England might have sat in his library facing his well-meaning but not too competent son, whom he had brought up with the idea that one day the ancestral land would be his, but now the ancestral land was mortgaged and a stranger was going to take it over.

"Try the Colonies"

"My dear boy, there's always the colonies. I don't know where they are myself, but your cousin Jasper had no more brains than you have, and they tell me that in Australia he's doing quite well."

As I walked home that day there was a warm westerly wind blowing. It had travelled all the way up the province, and the odors of the terrain it had crossed were still in it. I could smell spruce and salt water. Shadows dappled the old streets, and in the Public Gardens the wild geese were honking. I met friends on the street I had not seen in three years. Then I climbed Citadel Hill and walked slowly around it, seeing the patches in the long grass where sailors had lain with girls the night before, looking at Halifax spread round me like an open fan. Eastward was the Atlantic. All my life I had watched ships sailing in over that horizon and sailing out again, amazingly silent. Below me was the old Academy. We used to study our Virgil and Xenophon in the library and get up from time to time to spin the globe that stood near the window and look out over it at the harbor and the ships and the roofs of the town. In Halifax you felt as if you were sitting in a doorway that opened on time as well as on space. You could bring your dinghy up to the grey polished stones of Meagher's Beach in the outer harbor and get out and cook your beans over a driftwood fire just landward of the lighthouse, and you remembered the picture of Sir Walter Raleigh, no older than yourself, sitting on a similar beach, listening to tales from an old sailor, and you met sailors with tales of their own; and in the nights, when the town was silent, sometimes you could hear the rumble of trains in the cutting, circling the town, hauling the empties back to the West for more wheat, or pulling imports from Europe and fish from Nova Scotia into the hinterland of a Canada you had not yet seen, but knew you belonged to.

At that moment all my instincts were against leaving this place. I felt I had been away long enough already. I had liked England. I can truly say I had loved Oxford, as a man loves any place which is greater than its temporary inhabitants. But Oxford was through with me now.

The professor's words recurred to me: "You're a Canadian. You should go to the United States." I realized that I had never before thought of myself as a Canadian.

For in Nova Scotia—and I have since learned that it is much the same everywhere in Canada—we were Nova Scotians first and Canadians only when we applied for jobs or passports, or when a war broke out and the Government wanted an army, and even then they said that it was England, not Canada, that needed us.

I reached home and wrote applications for a job to every college and university in Canada. The only one reporting a vacancy was in the West. The head of the department wrote as follows:

"I will be glad to put your name and qualifications before the governors, but two Englishmen are applying for this job and I don't think you'll have much chance. American universities are always eager to have Canadians on their staffs. At present more than 20 presidents of American universities were born in Canada."

This professor lived nearly 3,000 miles from Halifax. He had given me the same answer, springing from the same point of view, that in cultural matters an Englishman is automatically superior to a Canadian and that a Canadian is probably superior to an American. How astonished Americans would be at the latter part of this assumption I did not know then, but I know now that it would seem too unreal even to make them sore.

So that fall I enrolled in an American graduate college, which promised a student fellowship that would pay room, lodging and research tuition and nothing else. I sailed from Halifax on the old Arabic on a Friday in September, and reached New York 36 hours later. It was on that vessel that I first encountered American mass-man.

I Meet Americans

The Arabic was crowded with tourists returning from a summer abroad, and the passenger list read like a roll call of the European nations between Lisbon and Riga. But they were all Americans, and they were going home. In spite of the differences in the pigments of their skins, the shapes of their heads, the tones of their voices, the varying amounts of money they had in the bank, they all seemed to share a common experience—the experience of being citizens of the United States—and when you observed them in the group you saw how it had marked them, as if they had all been in a war together. Individual Americans I had met before; many of them. For one year in Oxford I had shared a sitting room with a man from Nebraska, one of the nicest and ablest men I have ever met. But on the Arabic I could see nothing but the group, and it was the most distinct thing of its kind I had ever encountered. I tried to understand what made it distinctive, for I felt the difference between it and me; I felt it as something physical, something terribly important, something bigger and more formidable than anything I had run into yet.

Before we reached New York I thought I had learned at least one thing. I was not sure of it then. It was so different from anything I had ever been told, I would have been afraid to repeat it. But after all these years I am not afraid to say it now, because for me, at least, it is true. The one group quality these people had which stood out above all others was hardness.

Americans in the group are harder than any body of Englishmen or

Time out for Pleasure

Challenger

The Watch of "Protected Accuracy"

WHEN accuracy of time is of utmost importance, choose the proven time-tested Challenger Watch and be on time all the time. The Challenger movement is built in the famous Eterna Craftshops of Switzerland. A wide range of beautiful models at a wide range of prices.

Serviced in our stores from coast to coast.

BIRKS Jewellers

Lovely TO LIVE WITH for many a Christmas to come

● For yourself . . . for your friends . . . choose the lasting beauty and companionship of Deilcraft Occasional Furniture.

Here's a Christmas gift that truly keeps on giving. For Deilcraft is Canada's Finest Occasional Furniture . . . designed by Imperial of Grand Rapids . . . created by master craftsmen to bring you pride and pleasure through the years.

Deilcraft Fine Furniture
LOOK FOR THE DEILCRAFT TAG

FURNITURE DIVISION
DOMINION ELECTROHOME INDUSTRIES LIMITED
KITCHENER, ONTARIO

Canadians I have ever seen, and much harder than the Italians I have seen milling in the streets of Milan on the occasion of some Fascist jamboree. It may be that in this respect Americans are like Russians, and that the size of the country and the vastness of the population have something to do with it. The hardness is not physical, but mental, and when they think as a group, when there is something which really moves them as a group, don't be misled by any signs of surface excitement or Barnum showmanship, for underneath the surface the group mind is as coldly impersonal as a steel, and all the more effective because Americans do not know it is like this. They think themselves soft and easy-going as compared with other nations.

When the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor and the Germans followed it up with a declaration of war, I knew the Americans were going to be hard. All their righteous horror at the bombing of cities done by other nations would disappear. I knew they were going to bomb hell out of Germany and Japan, that they were going to wage war with loathing for its traditional aspects of infantry marches and travel in strange countries, but with a cold fascination for what they could do technically, and that engineers would work miracles now they had the government money behind them. I knew that the whole nation would come together and find itself, and in spite of the war be happier than it had been in the 1930's. I knew the Americans were going to display a ruthlessness — not crude, personal savagery hand to hand, but a mechanical and distant ruthlessness—which would make what Hitler and Tojo had in mind seem like something out of the Middle Ages. For the Americans, as a group, are the greatest military people the world has ever seen, because as a group they do not fight as soldiers. They fight as engineers, and they have reached the point now when it is only in wartime that the unique collective genius of their society can fully realize itself.

Their Past Ends at the Sea

The Arabic had one more lesson to offer before she discharged us. When we reached New York an emigration officer came into the lounge in his brown uniform and tight American pants and a silver eagle on his cap. "American ceetizens dees a way." The sheep were parted from the goats. When my turn came with the foreigners to pass him, the lounge was almost empty and only a few of us were left. An Englishman next to me spoke.

"You know, if you asked that emigration man what part of Italy he came from he'd be insulted."

I wanted to know why.

"He's not proud of being born an Italian. He's proud of being an American."

Afterward I learned how true this was. The United States wipes out the European past of its citizens. But Canada seems to encourage all of us to remember where we came from in Europe. Fourth generation Canadians in Cape Breton can tell you the name of the Highland village from which their ancestors set out. I remember reading in a French-language paper, on the occasion of a by-election in Quebec, not only that General LaFleche was a sound Canadian, but that his ancestors before him had been sound too, having come from the cradle of French Canada, a particularly named region of Anjou.

The Canadian's sense of his European past is unique in North America. Outside of Salem, Boston and perhaps a few towns in the old South, you

find no Americans who pride themselves on where their ancestors lived in Europe, or what they did there. Most of them don't even know.

After that first landfall in New York, I lived in the United States almost continuously for three years, in a university town in New Jersey where all the important college buildings except one were exact copies of famous structures in Oxford and Cambridge. But the resemblance was external only. Inside they were aseptic and modern, and what went on inside was not what went on in any English university.

In Canada the system of higher education is largely based on that of the Scottish universities. Superficially, American colleges resemble ours. But the attitude of their professors is very different, and what they value is different. The spiritual home of higher education in the United States, for at least a hundred years, has been Germany.

No Training to Think

I have often thought that you need look no farther than this if you want to know why American universities, in spite of having a larger number of students proportionately than the universities of any other country, have so little effect on the thought and action of the United States as a whole. Americans wisely trust the football coach more than the professor, for the dry formalism of Heidelberg and Berlin seminars does not fit the American mind, and Americans know it. So the university in the United States, when it is serious, is reduced to doing the only useful thing it can. It trains without educating. With the possible exception of Harvard and one or two other places, most of them small, hardly any American colleges raise students to think, and few of them even pretend to.

Canadian colleges, at least until recently, pretended to teach their students to think.

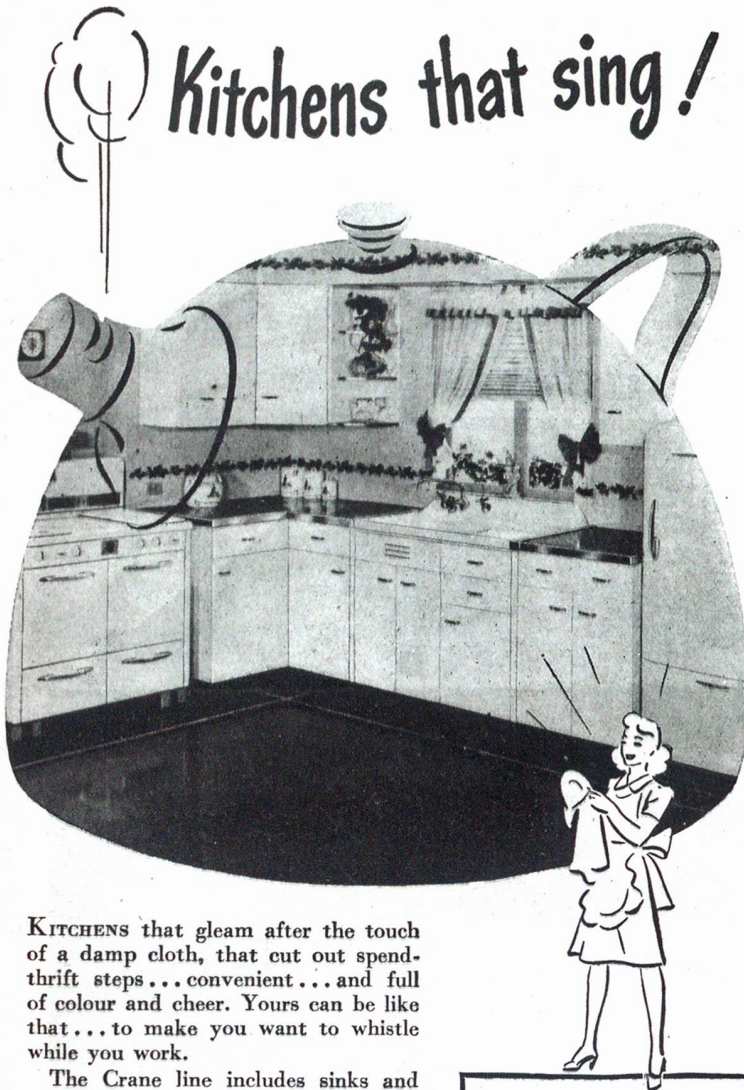
But if there is a difference in the higher education of our two countries, the difference in the grammar schools and high schools is even greater and more influential. In American state-supported schools, nationalism is indoctrinated from the first grade. The American child pledges himself to his flag every morning. Up to the time of writing, Canada has no flag to which a child could pledge himself even if the politicians wanted him to do so. In the United States there are no separate state schools for religious denominations. In the United States the public school offers a dead level of uniformity from Boston to San Diego. Here the schools vary from province to province and even from town to town, and if the Federal Government tried to force an honest textbook for Canadian history on the schools of Quebec and Ontario, both provinces using the same book, it would be voted out of office. The only uniformity which Canadian public schools offer is a uniformity in the wages they pay teachers. The average wage for a teacher in Canada is that of an unskilled, nonunionized day laborer.

Where two systems are bad, the only point in comparing them is to note the different directions in which the badness leads. American schools, as I said, foster nationalism; Canadian schools, provincialism. If the American system resembles Willow Run, ours is like a collection of old family businesses, some fairly good, others poor, others a disgrace to the community, nearly all of them paying sweated wages, and a large number of them borrowing from the bank every fall.

In my second year in the United

Continued on page 52





KITCHENS that gleam after the touch of a damp cloth, that cut out spend-thrift steps... convenient... and full of colour and cheer. Yours can be like that... to make you want to whistle while you work.

The Crane line includes sinks and cabinets adaptable to the most modern "planned kitchen" designs, to give you a host of practical shortcuts to reduced kitchen chores.

BATHROOMS, too... They can be both attractive and convenient centres for family cleanliness and health as well as for the soothing, therapeutic baths taken to relax tired muscles or strained nerves.

* * *

Supply is not yet equal to demand; but it is not too early to plan for a brand new home or to give the old one a face-lifting. Consult your Architect, and Plumbing and Heating Contractor. In the meantime, ask for the latest Crane literature—listed on the left.

CRANE PRINTED HELPS

1A "Planning the Bathroom and Kitchen". 24 pages of practical ideas for the home you plan to build.

2B "Plumbing Fixtures and Heating Equipment Now Being Manufactured". A product booklet.

3D "Cerity 'Lifetime' Chrome Bathroom Accessories". Lustrous soap dishes, towel bars and other items of modern design.

F4 "Choosing the Heating System For Your Home"—16 pages describing and illustrating various heating methods. You select the one which fits your purse and purpose.

5E "Plumbing and Heating Pointers". To help you keep going with equipment you now have.

CRANE

AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES

1-6194

CRANE Limited **WARDEN KING** Limited **CANADIAN POTTERIES** Limited **PORT HOPE SANITARY** Manufacturing Co. Limited

Plumbing Fixtures • Heating Equipment
Valves • Fittings • Piping

CRANE LIMITED, 1170 Beaver Hall Square, Montreal, 2, Canada

Branches in 18 Cities in Canada and Newfoundland

NATION WIDE REPRESENTATION THROUGH PLUMBING AND HEATING CONTRACTORS EVERYWHERE

Continued from page 50

States I bought a 13-year-old Studebaker which carried me, at a top speed of 37 miles an hour, into every state north of the Mason-Dixon line between the Atlantic seaboard and Chicago. That Studebaker introduced me to Americans at their best, Americans on the road. I became acquainted with truck drivers, farmers, businessmen, travelling salesmen, hitchhiking unemployed, clerks leaving a girl in one town to go to a girl in another, bootleggers and bums.

Meeting them this way it was easy to know Americans and impossible not to love them. This was how they seemed to themselves: on the road away from the business they are trained to pretend they like but seldom do. I had been thinking that Canada was a more real democracy than the United States; I still think it is, because we haven't as much wealth or as many factories. But on the roads democracy in the United States is very real, and you know that the country is greater than the factories which try to mechanize its feelings, and the advertisers who try to corrupt it, and the politicians and newspapers and movies that misrepresent it. If there is one thing for which I am grateful to the United States, it is for this sense of the open road. There is nothing like it in Canada. We haven't enough roads, and the ones we have are not wide enough or straight enough to give the feeling. Nor do we have wayside stopping places that make for good talk over good food.

In the United States nearly all the roads are wide, and they are more than a means of getting from one place to another. They stand for a way of life. They don't just lead from Chicago to St. Louis. They lead from Chicago, St. Louis, Detroit and Napoleon, Ohio, into the United States of legend, and they are among the things which make an American different from anyone else in the world. These great highways beckon the American to hopes that one in ten thousand fulfills; but the ten-thousandth man does it. They are the source of his freedom, just as they are also the source of his lawlessness. *Feelin' tomorrow just like I feels today—I'm gonna pack my bag and make my getaway.**

Only in the United States does the phrase, "get out of town," mean what it does there. Only in a country with such an attitude toward roads could Matt, a 60-year-old elevator man, making 20 a week in New York against rising prices, object to OPA as an infringement on his personal liberty. When I, down from Canada and proud of our price control, tried to argue that without OPA his wages wouldn't keep him alive, Matt's answer contained the reason for at least half of Harry Truman's headaches: "How do you know but what tomorrow may be my lucky day?"

Steadily, during those first three years in the United States, the knowledge was borne in on me that I did not fit. On the roads I fitted. Anyone could fit there. It was all right drinking beer in taverns after work or eating hamburgers in diners and listening to the sagas of truck drivers, sometimes sitting on a barrel in the locked-up saloon on a Saturday night hearing the bootlegger tell about the ingratitude of human nature, how he had just smashed up the bar of his best friend with a pickaxe and sent his friend to hospital because the friend had hijacked his truck the previous Wednesday.

It was wonderful picking up the

*The "St. Louis Blues," by W. C. Handy, with permission of Handy Bros. Music Co. Inc., copyright owners.

enormous variety of color and excitement, considering the charm of women, their friendliness, the way they dressed and moved when they walked; sometimes going into New York on a week end and observing, from the long distance of the sidewalk and the longer distance of only a few dollars in the pocket, the best-dressed women in the world stepping into taxis from the great hotels about the Plaza on their way to the theatre, while the sky over the park and Columbus Circle glowed with the last embers of sunset; and then the ramparts of the hotels along Central Park South breaking out their lights one by one until the whole was a cliff of light that finally lost itself in the purple upper darkness.

But the people here were not my people, nor could I easily become one of them. I missed the quietness of home. I missed the sense of my own past. I missed the knowledge that if I said something outrageous, people would not mark me down as queer, or automatically dislike me, but would make the allowances they will always make for a member of their own family, remembering that his background is also their background, and that the main part of a man is a product of it. A man needs a strange country to get a new sense of himself. But he needs his own country to be aware of his roots. Without using the phrase in the slightest sense nationalistically, I missed not being able to be a Canadian.

It was when I worked—and I did work most of the time—that I felt the widest difference. Then it was a matter of values: of things felt rather than of things said. The American attitude toward work is not quite the same as ours. They esteem work more, but they enjoy it less. On the whole there is less friendliness between co-workers; and where I was there was more subservience to higher-ups. This subservience is, of course, not American; in their universities it derives from the German influence. But in all walks of life in the United States, the fierce American ambition to get along produces strain. Canadians view their jobs more as long-term propositions. Americans view them as steppingstones to something better.

When you work with a people you must share their group values if you are to get along. If you don't share them, you must pretend that you do. Many Middle Europeans can pretend to share the group values of Americans better than a Canadian can, for the Canadian is so close to the United States that he often forgets that in American eyes he is a British subject. When he talks of how things are done at home, the American is apt to think he is criticizing, and no American can stand criticism from anyone who is British.

Whose America?

It took me a long time to accept the fact that in the eyes of the average American this whole continent — at least all of it that is worth much — belongs to him. Americans don't realize that Canadians have the same right to feel proprietary about it that they have themselves. An American does not feel the point in our assertion that we have a right to find fault with an American government, or with American big business because what is done by their governments and their businessmen profoundly affects the well-being of all Canada. The American's superiority complex, when he thinks of his country, is greater than anything the world has ever seen. His answer to our comments would probably be this: "If you want to criticize

Continued on page 54



Presenting
THE
"EXECUTIVE GROUP"
of fine
BRIEF CASES
by **McBRINE**

For those who need the best...

Men and women of business accomplishment want—and need—brief cases in keeping with their position. In the McBride "Executive Group" are all the qualities which reflect discernment: Smartly conservative styling, practical utility, obvious quality—that "Executive" look! See your McBride Baggage dealer.

Craftsmanship BY THE MAKERS OF
McBRINE
THE *Baggage* WITH CHARACTER



Soon again...

you will be our guest

We're preparing now to greet you... and you may look forward to a truly memorable visit! You will view all the storied charms of the Motherland from the picture windows of comfortable, modern trains.

You'll enjoy, too, delightful motor coach tours... fine hotel accommodations... a wide choice of cross-channel routes to Ireland and the Continent. Everywhere, you will travel in comfort—in friendliness—in keeping with the proud traditions of service and hospitality with which we have always welcomed our guests.



We have maintained representation in North America for many years to assure you of the most complete service.

Associated  **BRITISH & IRISH RAILWAYS**

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY • LONDON MIDLAND AND SCOTTISH RAILWAY
LONDON AND NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY • SOUTHERN RAILWAY • CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN

Continued from page 52

us, become an American citizen before you talk."

For the American knows that people from all over the world have wanted to come to the United States. He has been far more generous with his country than we have been with ours, as the American foreign-born population testifies. But he wants people to feel grateful; grateful to the United States as a nation. He wants incomers to feel grateful for being in the United States. To a Canadian this is a strange point of view. We never expect an American to feel grateful to us just because he happens to be in Canada. He, like ourselves, is also a North American.

During that time in the university in New Jersey I made many mistakes in what was expected as conduct for an in-comer. I grew increasingly uncomfortable. The head of my department, a wise and kindly man, finally said to me at the end of my third year, "Now you have your doctor's degree, I don't advise you to apply for a post in the United States. I say this for your own sake. You won't be happy here. I know your country, and I believe you will be happy there. Sometimes I feel I would fit better in Canada myself than I fit here. Canadians are what Americans used to be 40 years ago."

But this professor was a very exceptional American. For an American to suggest that a man could do better in any country but the United States is so rare it is almost unthinkable.

A few months later, after all the training that was supposed to have given me so many advantages, I accepted a job in Montreal that paid me the wages of a petty clerk. I was glad of it at the time, and I'm not sorry I took it now. When I stepped off the train in the old Bonaventure Station, though I knew no word of French, I felt at home. In a French-Canadian village today, though my French is still not good, I can feel at home. And in Canada I have always felt at home in my work, which is the ultimate test.

We Discover Ourselves

The countless important things which matter are here understood. It is not necessary to act a part. I came back to Canada at a time when Canadians of my age, in all provinces, were discovering vaguely what the Canadian Army discovered positively during the war: a Canadian point of view, incoherent as yet but strongly felt, really exists.

This long account of how one man came to know he was a Canadian would never have been written if he had not married an American girl. It was she who helped me discover Canada, so that I could put some of it into words; for she, in her own way, found another framework of differences when she came to live in my country. It was she who showed me why the first two novels I had written were failures. I had set the scene and characters of one book in Europe, of the second in the United States. They were not authentic. The innumerable sense impressions, the feeling for country, the instinct for what is valuable in a human being—these things were all colored by a Canadian background I had not accounted for, and which neither an American nor a European would accept without an explanation that was an inherent part of the story. Few novelists, writing of contemporary life, can risk setting the scene outside their own country unless their country is known to the whole world, and unless they make one of their own countrymen the leading character. It was my wife who persuaded me to see Canada

as it was and to write of it as I saw it.

So I have written and published two full-length novels with Canadian scenes, and now I am writing a third with scenes laid both in Canada and in the United States. Perhaps my life has made this third book inevitable. Ever since I returned to Canada I have been going back to the United States each year. Before the war we crossed the United States by car and lived for a summer in California. We spent an entire winter in New York. In the summer we live in a Canadian village that was founded and is still dominated by Americans.

No good can come from the pretense that societies and nations do not differ from one another, and there are differences between Canadian and Americans which will do us good to recognize. The ones I have found, of course, have been colored by myself.

Industrial Thinking

Canada is younger in time—in industrial time—than the United States. For the past hundred years social change has been almost entirely the product of science and technology. Industrialism in the United States is, by and large, 50 years older than it is here, in the sense that an industrial way of thinking, the application of mechanical principles to nearly everything, has penetrated American thought more deeply than it has ours.

The influence of religion is much greater in Canada than it is in the United States. Most Canadians still go to church. Apart from Roman Catholics—who in the United States are less strict than are French-Canadian Catholics—few Americans go to church regularly any more.

The puritanism which is still dominant in Canada has grown so weak in most parts of the United States, particularly in cities of the East and in California, that you could almost think the coat had been turned inside out. The American divorce rate is now about 10 times higher than ours. As a counterpart, there is more frankness between the sexes among Americans than there is here, especially among the middle-aged. Canadians are probably no more virtuous in thought than Americans are, but their inhibitions keep them from turning a good many of their ideas into action.

Americans are more optimistic, both about themselves and about their country, than Canadians are. The reason for this may be partly climatic, but most of it is historical. The United States was formed as the result of a successful revolution. Since that time it has never lost a war. Most of its great projects have been successful. But the original groups which developed Canada all became Canadians as the result of being on the losing side in war or revolution. The French were abandoned along the Saint Lawrence when France lost the Seven Years' War. The Loyalists came to Canada only because they were forced out of the United States. The Highlanders came here after the breakup of the clans because they had no other place to go. Only the Scotch-Irish and the so-called New Canadians seem to have come here of their own free will, and the Scotch-Irish, being mostly Calvinists, were not brought up to an optimistic view of life.

Americans are never afraid of making a mistake, and hold it against no one else if he does. This is the mark of a big man, and of a great nation. It is the reason the rest of the world admires them, in spite of their adolescence and lesser qualities. Canadians pay too much importance to mistakes. Our country is poorer than the United

States, but it is not as poor as we make it.

Americans are proud of what they do. The excessive puritanism of Canadians makes them proud of what they don't do.

Americans think too large, and this makes them irresponsible as a nation. They do not yet realize how much bigger a portent the atomic bomb is than the miraculous engineering and scientific feats which produced it. But Canadians think too small, and this reduces our effectiveness as a nation. We let too many able men go to the United States because we are too small to give them what they need. Small thinking encourages mediocrity and denies greatness. Neither our large employers nor our government has learned what all Americans take for granted: if you want the best, you must pay for it. If you want excellence, you must put up with its eccentricities and give it rein.

The Canadian and American attitude toward snobbery differs. In the United States a man is snobbish because he has too much money or because his family has been in the country a long time. In Canada money helps a snob as it does anywhere. But usually our snobbery is traceable to English ties, and certainly it does not depend on how long a family has been in Canada.

Canadians have more common sense than Americans, and our government has been a living testimony of this both during and after the war. The American pays twice as much for his milk and meat, and half as much for his cigarettes, as we do.

Canada has a better form of government than the United States, and therefore a better ability to advance real democracy. The American con-

One thing I would like to say, which I hope any American who reads this will take in the spirit in which it is intended. I think that Canada has been, is, and may be in the future, more fortunate than the United States. We have never had a civil war, and therefore we have hardly any memories of mutual bloodshed. At the present time of transition, our small size of population makes the strains easier. In facing the future, we are less the prisoners of our own past. For it seems that nothing but catastrophe can check the furious progress of Americans into a still more bleak and dangerous desert of technology than they have reached now. The very vastness of the apparatus their genius has created stands over them now like a strange and terrible master. Every man, as Sophocles said years ago, loves what he has made himself. Canadians have as yet fallen in love with no such Frankenstein. And, as a result of this, our future is more clearly in our own hands. We are not so entirely in the grip of internal forces beyond our own control. Socialism in the United States, if it comes, might easily be totalitarian. Socialism in Canada, if it comes, will certainly be democratic.

We are fortunate, perhaps, because we are less rich in money. I do not intend this sentence as a text for a certain kind of employer who might use it as a pious pretext to underpay his labor. But the money in the United States is too big. Where money is the measure of too much, man is the measure of too little.

These many differences, of feeling and value, of fact and method, existing between the United States and Canada are all to the good. There are far too few differences on this continent as it is. The greatest spiritual enemy all North Americans face above the Rio Grande is uniformity. Industrialists and managers, who measure life by production, force more uniformity on us every year that passes. The economic man they were dreaming about a few decades ago would be, if he existed, nothing but an enormous consuming belly. The megalomania of technologists abets the managers in this. Those who would harness the power of the sun, who are plotting to control the weather by push buttons, are fools or hypocrites if they pretend that the attainment of such power in any near future would be anything but a monstrous evil. Mankind evolves slowly. Human society must be allowed to grow in its own time; like a tree, it should bear fruit in its season. Any gardeners know that you can only force the soil so far. If you do more than this, it rebels. If you give a plant too much chemical stimulant too quickly, it dies. The whole industrial process of this continent, like a ponderous animal which has not yet learned to reason, seems to feel by some primitive instinct that uniformity is desirable, that if all differences are wiped out between men, in effect only one man will be left. And, of course, it is easier to control one man than a multitude.

But these fears apply more to the future than to the present. At the present it is hard to see how Canada can become uniform, with the Province of Quebec in its heart. She can never, if we have the sense to see what she offers, be dull. She can never, with the United States beside her, be static. We have learned, both Canadians and Americans, something which no other pair of nations so mutually interdependent has yet learned in history. Real tolerance consists in much more than abstention in the use of military force to compel uniformity. It consists in the ability not only to recognize your neighbor's differences but also to enjoy them. ★

A Matter of Paper

Continuing world shortages have greatly affected deliveries of the type of paper this publication normally uses.

The mills are doing their best, but are unable to supply us with enough paper of uniformly high grade.

We, too, are doing our best.

Should your copy of Maclean's contain paper not as good as usual, it is because that is the only way in which the publishers can maintain full service to the largest possible number of readers.

And if for the same reason your copy is late in reaching you, we ask your indulgence.

stitution is too rigid, and stays rigid because they have made it a sacred document. At the present moment a man who does not wish to be president, and whom the majority of Americans do not wish to be president, must serve his term as a prisoner of the Constitution for two more years. The chief executive in the United States has too much responsibility, because he is not supported by an elected Cabinet, and the pressure of work is too great for one man. Mackenzie King is still with us after 20 years, and improves with age like wine in the bottle. No American president could stay alive that long in office.

Coro
MASTERPIECES OF FASHION JEWELLERY
FOR CHRISTMAS

ABOUT \$36.00

ABOUT \$40.00

ABOUT \$2.00

ABOUT \$10.00

ABOUT \$3.50

ABOUT \$8.00 per set

Coro

CORO (CANADA) LIMITED
 69 YORK ST. TORONTO

Coro . . . beautifully made costume jewellery, in sterling or gold plated metal, set with brilliant simulated gems. To be given at Christmas to those who appreciate modern jewels at their best. At leading stores.

All Coro Designs are original.

How We Differ From Americans

MACLEAN'S | DECEMBER 15, 1946



Reprinted from the Maclean's Archive

<https://archive.macleans.ca/article/19461215016/print>

