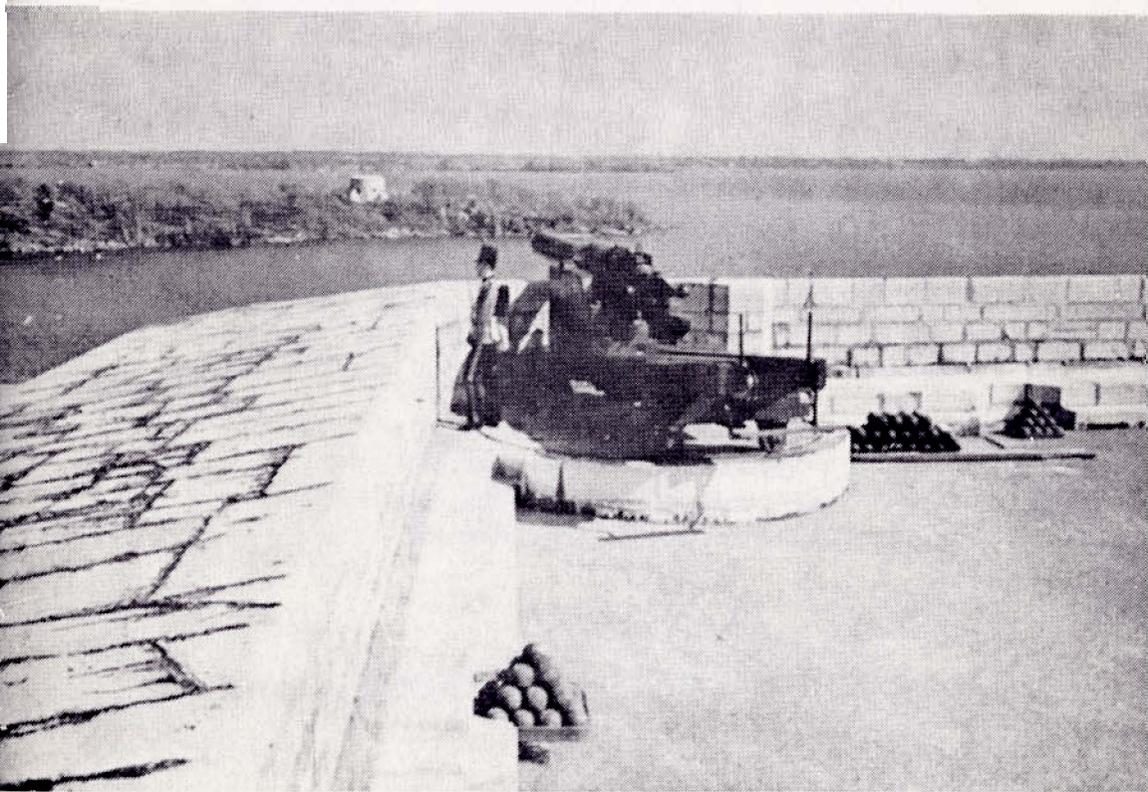


THE UNDEFENDED BORDER THE MYTH AND THE REALITY

C. P. Stacey

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FORT HENRY, KINGSTON, ONTARIO

Photo by George Lilley

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THE UNDEFENDED BORDER

The Myth and the Reality

by

C. P. STACEY

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The author of this booklet, C. P. Stacey, is a graduate of the Universities of Toronto and Oxford and has been a member of the Department of History at Princeton University. Recently retired as director of the Historical Section, Army Headquarters, Ottawa, he is now Professor of History at the University of Toronto. He is an ex-President of the Canadian Historical Association. He has written many historical works including, in addition to those mentioned in the list on page 18, The Canadian Army, 1934-1945 (Ottawa, (1948); Quebec, 1759 : The Siege and the Battle (Toronto, 1959); and The Victory Campaign (Ottawa, 1960), the third volume of the official history of the Canadian Army in the Second World War.

The photograph on the cover of the booklet is of Cathcart Redoubt, Cedar Island, Kingston, Ontario, as seen from Fort Henry. Cathcart Redoubt was one of the Martello towers built at Kingston in 1846, during the Oregon dispute. Fort Henry was built in 1832-36 and extended in 1841-42. It has recently been restored as a historic site. The soldier is a member of the "Fort Henry Guard" in Victorian uniform. The gun is a 7-inch Armstrong breech-loader of 1861. The land on the horizon is Wolfe Island. Beyond lies the United States.

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THE UNDEFENDED BORDER

THE MYTH AND THE REALITY

Today Canada and the United States are firm friends and faithful allies; and a very good thing it is for both of them. But they were not always so.

People who make speeches and people who write editorials have for many years now been fond of talking about the "undefended border" between the two countries. And some people have the idea that the present happy relationship between them is part of the natural order of things and existed from very early times. This is too bad; for the thing that makes that relationship interesting and significant for the world today is the fact that it evolved slowly and painfully from a very different state of things.

Even forgetting altogether about the old wars between French Canada and the thirteen British colonies to the south in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were two wars between British Canada and the American republic: in 1775-83 and 1812-14. After the Treaty of Ghent ended the era of actual conflict, there were two generations of rumours of wars. More than once Britain (and Canada) were on the edge of another conflict with the United States. Only when the Treaty of Washington settled the outstanding issues between the two parts of the English-speaking world in 1871 did we enter the modern era of peace and goodwill. Only since then can it be said that the border has been truly undefended.

FACT AND FICTION ABOUT 1812

Many people in Canada think of the War of 1812 as a conflict in which untrained Canadian militiamen with a little help from British regulars defeated the American colossus. Nothing could be further from the truth. In that war, as in most wars, fortune favoured the side that was better prepared. Before war broke out Great Britain had made preparations in Canada which enabled the country to be successfully defended. The United States had superiority in numbers and physical power, but its power was ill-organized.

The salvation of Canada was due to the presence at the beginning of the war of a few efficient regiments of British regular soldiers

{a good many of whom were British Americans); trained officers who provided skilful and vigorous leadership; and a naval force capable of controlling the Great Lakes. The regulars did more than set an example to the militia; they did the lion's share of the actual fighting, as the casualty figures amply show. And Canada's Provincial Marine on the Lakes was vastly important. It wasn't much of a navy, but its armed vessels were better than anything the Americans had at the outset; and, although many histories overlook it, it was this ascendancy on the Lakes (which were his vital line of communication as well as the border he had to defend) that enabled General Brock to win his remarkable successes in 1812.

Twice during Anglo-American diplomatic negotiations, in 1782 and in 1794, the Americans had proposed the demilitarization of the border. If Britain had agreed to this, Canada would have been lost in 1812 in a few weeks; for the British would have been prevented from making the preparations that saved her, particularly from building the lake flotillas. Both sides would have started from scratch and, simply because there were more of them, the Americans would have won.

The importance of naval superiority on the lakes is shown by the tremendous efforts that both sides made to obtain and keep it. The British squadron on Lake Erie was defeated in 1813, and the instant result was the loss of the western part of Upper Canada. Lake Ontario was still more important, so much so that neither of the opposing squadrons there would risk a stand-up fight without feeling certain of victory. The consequence was an extraordinary competition in shipbuilding. At the end of the war the British commodore was flying his pennant in a three-decker more powerful than Nelson's *Victory*, and had two even more formidable ships on the stocks at his base at Kingston; while the Americans on their side were building two vessels which, if they had been completed, would have been the largest in the world. The cost of these ships, in money and energy, was enormous; and when it is remembered that virtually all the armament and fittings of the British squadron had to come from England and be hauled with infinite labour up the St. Lawrence rapids, it will be realized that the creation and maintenance of the naval force on Lake Ontario was a major part of the great effort put forth by Britain in defence of Canada in this war.

THE "RUSH-BAGOT" AGREEMENT

When peace came the United States was in financial straits and economy was the order of the day. Congress immediately authorized the President to sell or lay up all the armed vessels on the Lakes except those needed to enforce the revenue laws. Their armament and

equipment were to be preserved. The two great unfinished three-deckers were carefully protected so they could be completed in case of need. But the active navy on the American side of the Lakes practically ceased to exist overnight. On the British side there was a very great reduction, but it wasn't so sweeping, and a number of small ships were kept in commission. There was talk of maintaining a larger force on a permanent basis and of building new ships; and although little or nothing was actually done this alarmed the United States Government. The result was that in 1816 Secretary of State James Monroe proposed to the British a very drastic limitation of naval armaments on the Lakes.

The first British reaction to the proposal was unfavourable; but a few weeks later the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, told the U. S. Minister in London that the Government had decided to accept it. In 1817 a formal agreement was made. It was *not* a treaty, but merely an exchange of notes between the U. S. Acting Secretary of State, Richard Rush, and the British Minister in Washington, Sir Charles Bagot. Thus by accident it came to carry the names of two men who had really had very little to do with the negotiation. The people most responsible for the agreement were Monroe and Castlereagh.

The agreement allowed each side to maintain one small vessel (not over 100 tons, and mounting only one gun, not larger than an 18-pounder) on Lake Champlain, one on Lake Ontario, and two on the upper lakes. All other warships were to be at once dismantled, and no others were to be built or armed. But there was no stipulation that the existing ships should be destroyed, or the existing dockyards abolished; and they remained in existence on both sides. The British Admiralty in fact continued to spend money to repair the ships laid up at Kingston until 1831, when, having been built of green timber, they were apparently hopelessly rotten; and one of the unfinished American three-deckers, housed over to keep out the weather, actually stayed on the list of the U.S. Navy until 1882 !

It was the Americans who had suggested and pressed for the agreement; it was the British who had made the concessions and the sacrifices. Nobody in 1817 thought that another Anglo-American war was "unthinkable"; and the Rush-Bagot agreement certainly made the conquest of Canada by the United States much more likely if there *was* another war. If both sides were unprepared, the side with the larger population and resources on the spot would win. The British in 1817 gave up some of the advantages that had saved Canada in 1812. As Commodore Owen, the Royal Navy's commander on the Lakes, said in protesting against the agreement, the Americans, being so much superior on the spot in physical force, naturally favoured every expedient "that would reduce a future contest to a competition of physical force only".

Why did the British accept the agreement? We can only conjecture. Economy was probably a great motive. Members of the British Parliament were criticizing the amount of money that was being spent on the army and navy, and it must have seemed doubtful whether the House of Commons would be willing to pay the bill for a naval building-race on the Great Lakes. And there was always the question whether, in view of the superiority of the Americans in local resources, Britain could win such a race and actually maintain naval superiority in a future war. Moreover, the wartime ships laid up at Kingston would be a form of insurance. At any rate, Downing Street decided to accept the immediate advantages of disarmament and take a chance on the future. It turned out in the long run to be a sound decision.

There is a fairly widespread popular impression that the Rush-Bagot agreement prohibited border forts as well as lake warships. It did no such thing; it was concerned only with naval armaments. And even historians have sometimes jumped to the conclusion that in spite of this fact the agreement, by some peculiar indirect process, caused the dismantling of fortifications and produced an undefended border. They would not write this way if they had examined either the records or the border itself, at places such as Rouse's Point and Kingston. The fact is that more, and more elaborate, forts were built along the border during the half-century following the Rush-Bagot agreement than in any other period of North American history, and the years immediately after the agreement were a particularly active era in fort-building and other military activity.

A HALF-CENTURY OF NEAR-CONFLICT

As we have said, at the time when the Rush-Bagot agreement was made few people if any thought that there would never be another war between Britain and the United States. In fact, for more than fifty years afterwards such a war always seemed possible. Sometimes it seemed decidedly probable.

It is true that for some years after the Treaty of Ghent Anglo-American and Canadian-American relations were comparatively tranquil; but just as the bitter memories of the war were beginning to fade, the Canadian rebellions of 1837 touched off another crisis. Many Americans were anxious to intervene in Canada's troubles and formed organizations to do so. The result was border raids and skirmishes which caused a good deal of bloodshed and might well have brought on an official war. In 1839 this crisis shaded off into another, the "Aroostook War," bloodless but very dangerous, between Maine and New Brunswick over the unsettled boundary between them. Then when this sore point was disposed of by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty (1842), trouble over the Oregon boundary on the other side of the continent followed, and there

were apprehensions of war until 1846, when another treaty settled that dispute. The 'fifties were peaceful, on the whole; the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 emphasized the friendly state of relations between Canada and her neighbour, and the Prince of Wales's visit to the United States in 1860 actually led people to talk about permanent peace. But even this happy decade had its dangerous controversies, particularly over the British attempt to recruit in the States during the Crimean War and over the San Juan Island boundary in 1859; and the very year after the young Prince's trip the outbreak of the Civil War, which tore the American Union apart, brought on an Anglo-American crisis that lasted ten full years.

In the autumn of 1861 the *Trent* affair, when a Union cruiser took two Confederate diplomatic agents off a British ship on the high seas, brought war closer than it had ever been since 1814, so close that the British Government ordered about 11,000 troops across the Atlantic to strengthen the garrison of British North America. The good sense of the Prince Consort, who toned down the British demand for satisfaction, and of Lincoln's government, who acceded to the demand, prevented an outbreak; but the episode left bitterness behind it. This was later heightened by the depredations of the *Alabama* and other Confederate cruisers fitted out in British ports. When the Civil War ended, the Fenian Brotherhood in the United States began to organize attacks on Canada. This hostile Irish-American agitation went on for years; there was a certain amount of actual fighting, the British Government again sent out large regular reinforcements, Canada herself was put to great expense and residents of her border areas were kept in terror, and infinite international illwill was generated. This grim period, whose greatest significance in our history is that its various menaces helped to produce the Confederation of British North America, was ended only by the Treaty of Washington of 1871, when Britain agreed to arbitrate the *Alabama* claims.

CANADA PREPARES FOR ANOTHER WAR

All these crises had their due effect in the form of military preparations on both sides of the border.

In Canada the British military authorities had drawn definite lessons from the War of 1812. The greatest of these was the need for an inland line of communication to replace the vulnerable international section of the St. Lawrence. The Americans' worst strategic blunder had been their failure to concentrate their strength against this great lifeline which carried all the supplies that made the defence of Upper Canada possible. But they had learned their lesson, and if there had been an 1815 campaign they had intended to make their chief attack here. The British knew this (for an American

general, visiting Kingston just after the war, hadn't been able to resist the temptation to talk about it); and the moral they drew was that the Ottawa River should be canalized and a canal built by way of the Rideau River and Lakes to connect it with Lake Ontario. Work began on the Ottawa in 1819; the Rideau Canal was commenced in 1826; and when it was finished in 1832 Canada had a military supply line between Montreal and Kingston quite independent of the St. Lawrence. The British taxpayer had paid the bill, just about one million pounds, which makes it the most expensive military work ever carried out by the British Government in North America.

This great canal system had been part of a defence programme recommended in 1818 by the then Governor in Chief, the Duke of Richmond, and supported by the Duke of Wellington. This plan also included large fortification projects, particularly a proper permanent citadel for Quebec, which had never had one. The great citadel which still stands was built between 1820 and 1831. And beginning in 1819 a new fort was built to protect Isle-aux-Noix on the Richelieu, which was the British naval base for Lake Champlain. It too is still to be seen.

In 1825 a British military commission had visited Canada to report on the country's defences. It had recommended a great programme of works (including the Rideau Canal). The whole scheme was far too expensive for the British Government, but it did produce, in addition to the canal, two important fortifications: the imposing citadel that dominates Halifax, and Fort Henry, built in 1832-36 to protect the naval dockyard and the outlet of the canal at Kingston. Fort Henry has been restored in recent years and is a leading tourist attraction and a fascinating memorial of an age that is gone.

The Oregon dispute led to the building of four Martello towers to guard the dockyard and harbour of Kingston against naval attack. The long Civil War crisis produced many fortification projects, but only one important new one was actually carried out. This was the extension of the Quebec fortress by the construction in 1865-72 of a fortified bridgehead at Lévis on the south side of the St. Lawrence (three forts connected by a road and an earthwork rampart), which cost the British exchequer a quarter of a million pounds. These forts are a monument to the extremely precarious state of Anglo-American relations in the final stage of the Civil War, when people in Britain and British North America were wondering fearfully whether General Grant's victorious armies would turn against Canada when their task was finished in the South. They were the last such works built on the Canadian side of a frontier which henceforth would, for the first time in history, be genuinely "unfortified."

THE U. S. PREPARES FOR ANOTHER WAR

Forts were built on the American side of the border too, but the situation here was quite different from Canada's. Anyone who had read the history of 1812-14 or looked at a map knew that if there was another war between Britain and the United States it would be fought on two main fronts: the Canadian-American border and the United States' Atlantic coast. On the former the Americans had great advantages: vast superiority in numbers, more industries, better communications. Every soldier who ever considered the problem came to the conclusion that British strategy on the border could never be anything but basically defensive. Locally the British were weaker than the Americans; therefore, they had far more need for fortifications and other artificial preparations.

On the seaboard it was different. Americans remembered the British blockade that had clamped down during the war; the roving cruisers and battleships that seemed to threaten every coastal town; above all, the crowning humiliation of the capture of Washington and the burning of the Capitol and the White House. This was the front where Britain could act offensively. She had the largest navy in the world; she had convenient bases at Halifax and Bermuda. So it was on the Atlantic coast, not on the border, that the United States made its main defensive preparations. As early as 1815 a large programme of coastal fortifications was launched, and the work went on for decades.

From 1816 to 1829, inclusive, Congress appropriated over eight million dollars for fortifications, and only about \$200,000 of it was spent on the Canadian border. This went chiefly to two positions: the old work at Fort Niagara, at the Lake Ontario end of the Niagara River, and new ones at Rouse's Point, New York. This latter place was on the traditional invasion route by the Richelieu River, the old war trail linking New York and Montreal, at the only point where a fort could block the advance of British vessels from Isle-aux-Noix into Lake Champlain. But the U. S. plans here met with a sad setback. In 1818, when over \$100,000 had been spent and a strong stone tower on an islet in the river was nearly finished, astronomers carrying out the border survey prescribed by the Treaty of Ghent found that the line which had been accepted as the 45th parallel, the international boundary at this point, was three-quarters of a mile too far north. The American fortifications had been built in Canada. The work was hastily stopped, and in a few years the tower was a ruin.

The border troubles commencing in 1837 led the Americans to pay more attention to defences facing Canada. Beginning in 1839 the existing forts at Niagara and Oswego were renovated. From 1841 onwards new ones were built at Detroit (Fort Wayne) and

Buffalo (Fort Porter). The Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 let the United States keep the vital Rouse's Point site, the old inaccurately surveyed boundary being allowed to stand; two years later construction commenced there on the most important of all American border fortifications, the formidable work called Fort Montgomery.

Not much was done along the border during the relatively peaceful 'fifties, but the *Trent* crisis in 1861 altered the situation, and through the Civil War and its aftermath work on the forts at Detroit, Niagara, Oswego, and Rouse's Point was pushed. By 1870 Fort Montgomery was finished. It already needed alteration to fit more modern armament; but these changes were never made. With 1871 and the *Alabama* settlement came a basic improvement in Anglo-American relations. No important work was done on the U. S. border forts after 1872.

EVADING THE RUSH-BAGOT AGREEMENT

In spite of the Rush-Bagot agreement, naval activity on the Lakes continued after 1817; both sides evaded the letter of the agreement at different times, and the state of the naval forces was a pretty good barometer of the state of international relations. The introduction of iron ships and steam, incidentally, led to a general increase in tonnage and made it virtually impossible to keep within the limits prescribed by the agreement. The British commissioned gunboats in 1838 as a measure of protection against the American filibustering organizations, and maintained a considerable establishment for some years thereafter. In 1842-44 the United States built an iron gunboat, the *Michigan*, of nearly 600 tons, which remained in commission well into the twentieth century. In subsequent crises the British regularly re-discovered this ship and regarded her with some suspicion. They also mistrusted the American practice of building and maintaining "revenue cutters" which were not officially naval vessels, but were capable of being used as such. On their own side the British, during the Oregon controversy, subsidized the building of three merchant steamers which could likewise be used as warships in an emergency. Apart from these, they had at this time a considerable flotilla on the Lakes. During the Civil War the U. S. built more cutters. After 1852 the British had no armed vessels at all until 1866, when the Fenians' raids and threats led them to bring small gunboats of the Royal Navy up the St. Lawrence canals and to convert lake steamers into improvised fighting ships.

During the Civil War the Rush-Bagot agreement had its narrowest squeak. Its terms provided that it could be ended on the initiative of either party on six months' notice. American feeling against Canada reached its hottest point late in 1864, after the St.

Albans Raid, when a small group of Confederate soldiers who had secretly assembled in Canada slipped across the border and terrorized the town of St. Albans, Vermont. The United States now actually gave notice to end the agreement. Fortunately, sober second thought prevailed, and before the six months were up the State Department withdrew the notice. The agreement of 1817 remained, and remains, in effect.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

We have spoken several times of the significance of the Treaty of Washington of 1871. It was in fact the Great Divide in Anglo-American and Canadian-American relations. The treaty liquidated the dangerous controversies left over from the Civil War; and no other serious international difficulties arose to take their places. The fact is that there was no longer very much left to fight about. The great territorial problems had been settled by the Webster-Ashburton and Oregon treaties; a minor one was settled in 1872 when the German Emperor arbitrated the San Juan question; and there was no other serious dispute until the issue of the Alaska boundary came to the front after the Klondike gold rush of 1898. At the same time, both Canada and the United States had settled those internal problems that had invited foreign intervention. Canada had achieved responsible government and so had peacefully and satisfactorily solved the problem of her relationship to the Empire; through Confederation she had attained new strength and stability; and still more recently she had acquired the prairie country and achieved union with British Columbia. The Americans on their side had settled, at great cost in blood, the slavery question that had plagued their country so long. And both countries had ahead of them tasks of peaceful economic development that would tax their powers for years to come.

Other circumstances arising at the same moment were favourable to a more peaceful atmosphere. In particular, the Fenians, who had troubled the border for six years, were at their last gasp. (This was as well for them, as the United States Government, which had not been much disposed to interfere with them as long as the *Alabama* claims remained unsettled, was less inclined to tolerate their making war upon a friendly neighbour now that that issue was finished with.) Moreover, the British Army, which had protected British North America so long, was now withdrawing. The long-suffering British taxpayer had long ceased to suffer in silence. For many years there had been demands for relief from the burden of the garrisons of the self-governing colonies. In 1867 the *London Times* said that it looked to Canadian Confederation "as the means of relieving this country from much expense and much embarrassment". "We appreciate the goodwill of the Canadians and their desire to maintain

their relations with the British Crown. But a people of four millions ought to be able to keep up their own defences." There was much justice in this attitude, and Mr. Gladstone's government was now acting in accordance with it. In November 1871 the British troops said good-bye to the fortress of Quebec, which they had garrisoned since 1759. Thereafter they were seen in Canada only at the Imperial naval station of Halifax (and later, for a time, at the other naval station of Esquimalt in British Columbia). As recently as 1862 there had been about 18,000 British regulars in North America.

The British troops' departure helped to make the atmosphere of Canadian-American relations less military. The British Government had always borne the main weight of Canadian defence against the United States, and the Canadian Government and Parliament were not disposed to spend money in the same amounts for that object as long as the prospects for peace seemed good. They organized a very, very few regular troops of their own (two artillery batteries in the first instance) to look after the forts at Quebec and Kingston which the British Army had built, but they did not keep up a large military force and they built no more forts on or near the border. In the years after the Civil War the United Kingdom had undertaken to guarantee a Canadian loan to finance forts at Montreal and elsewhere. But it was typical of the changing state of things that in 1873 this guarantee was converted into one for a transcontinental railway.

So the border lapsed into agreeable somnolence, a striking contrast with the feverish military activity of a few years before. Small garrisons of United States regulars and of Canada's miniature Permanent Force continued to occupy the old border stations; but the forts on both sides became increasingly obsolete and soon were nothing but historical monuments. Except for the elderly U.S.S. *Michigan*, still chugging about the upper lakes on her lawful occasions, naval vessels had wholly disappeared from the inland seas. The last Canadian anti-Fenian gunboats, *Prince Alfred* and *Rescue*, had vanished in the early 'seventies. Thus genuine demilitarization of the border had at last arrived. The Treaty of Ghent had not achieved it, nor had the Rush-Bagot agreement. It arrived in the years following the Treaty of Washington, which had made no reference to armaments at all. Disarmament became a reality, not by international agreement, but simply because there was no longer any serious international disagreement.

PEACE AND TRANSITION

The first great period of Canadian-American relations was one of wars, ending in 1814; the second was one of danger of war, ending in 1871. The third was a period of peace and increasing cooperation, and for convenience we may say that this extended to 1940.

Rome was not built in a day, nor was a relationship of confidence between Britain and the United States, and Canada and the United States, created overnight. (We must carefully bear in mind that the relation was triangular; Canada was a part of the British Empire, and her diplomatic contacts with the U.S. were through the British Embassy in Washington until after the First World War.) The change from an armed to a largely unarmed border was remarkably rapid, thanks largely to the fact that the British troops' withdrawal happened to coincide with the *Alabama* settlement. Mental disarmament came rather more slowly, and this is not surprising.

Yet there was steady progress. In contrast with what had happened in 1837 and even in the first Riel rising in 1869-70, when Canada had to send troops to put down Louis Riel's second rising in the North-West in 1885 there was very little tendency apparent on the part of American citizens to interfere or to fish in Canada's troubled waters. Actually, the last time when an Anglo-American crisis caused a Canadian government to make defensive preparations against the United States was in 1895, the occasion being the boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana. There had been a long-standing dispute over this, and suddenly President Cleveland, bringing the Monroe Doctrine out of retirement, sent to Congress a message that amounted to a threat of war. Before things blew over the Canadian government had decided to re-arm the militia with modern magazine rifles in place of the ancient Sniders issued in 1866.

There was a great deal of ill-feeling in Canada over the Alaska Boundary settlement of 1903, and particularly over President Theodore Roosevelt's appointments to the Tribunal; but although Roosevelt sent troops to Alaska at the height of the controversy, any thought of either side appealing to force seems never to have occurred to the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Indeed, at this very moment he is reported to have told an officer arriving from England to take command of the militia that he did not need to take the force seriously, as the Monroe Doctrine protected Canada against enemy aggression! Things were certainly changing.

The new era on the border was reflected in 1909 in the Boundary Waters Treaty which set up the International Joint Commission as a permanent organ for settling difficulties arising between the two countries. Five years later came the First World War, and in 1917 the United States became an ally of Britain and Canada. Although no formal association survived the war, there is no doubt that it had helped to bring the English-speaking nations into closer permanent understanding. In particular, it tended to reduce the number of Americans who still thought of Britain in terms of King George III, and to multiply those who knew her for a sister democracy. Inevitably this helped to improve relations with Canada.

As the skies darkened over Europe in the 'thirties and the Second World War approached, there was a tendency for Canada and the United States to draw closer together; those "ties of common funk" which Kipling once wrote about were showing their strength. In the summer of 1938 President Franklin D. Roosevelt made the famous speech in which he said that the American people would "not stand idly by" if Canada were threatened. This policy met no criticism in the United States, for it was clearly dictated by the most obvious considerations of American national security; the republic could not, in its own interest, permit a European dictatorship to establish itself in a North American state. That was elementary.

THE POLICY OF ALLIANCE

The fourth period in the history of Canadian-American relations, as we have seen, may be said to begin in 1940. It's the period of close military association; indeed, though the phrase seldom seems to be used officially, of actual alliance.

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, Canada and the United States, in the beginning, went separate ways. Each followed its own traditions. Canada, after one week of formal neutrality, declared war on Germany and began to build up forces in Europe to assist Britain and France and to fight the enemies of freedom as far from North America as possible. The United States, while certainly cordially detesting Hitler, stood neutral and sought to avoid involvement. But when events in Europe in the spring and summer of 1940, a great German victory and the collapse of France, left Britain and the Commonwealth standing alone against Germany and Italy, the United States was seriously alarmed. It began to pour arms across the Atlantic to Britain; it increased its own forces; and it made a military arrangement with its northern neighbour. In August 1940 the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. King, met President Roosevelt at Ogdensburg, New York; and they agreed to set up a Permanent Joint Board on Defence to consider the problems of defending "the north half of the Western Hemisphere" against aggression.

For the next sixteen months the world witnessed the rather unusual spectacle of a belligerent nation engaging in close military cooperation with a neutral. Then came Pearl Harbor, American belligerency, and still fuller cooperation. This is not the place to tell the story; but many American soldiers and airmen served in Canada and Newfoundland, and many great enterprises on Canadian soil, notably the Alaska Highway and the airfields of the North-West and North-East Staging Routes, bear their mark. Canadians served in American territory too, and the obtuse American collector of customs in Alaska who tried to make the men of an R.C.A.F. unit pay duty on the

equipment which they were bringing in for the common defence met more than his match in the American Secretary of State. Mr. Cordell Hull circumvented him by certifying that the airmen were "distinguished visitors" entitled to enter without customs examination. They were, he pointed out, the first foreign nationals to join with the United States in defence of American soil since the days of Lafayette.

This time, when the war ended, the international association did not end. Canada and the United States continued their military cooperation through the Permanent Joint Board on Defence. In 1949, under the shadow of Communist imperialism, a further step was taken. Canada, the United States, Britain and nine other countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty binding themselves to consider an armed attack against any of them an attack against them all, and to develop their defences accordingly. Thus the new Canadian-American defence arrangement, and the ancient family relationship of Canada and Britain, both merged into a larger international alliance. Under the terms of this alliance Canadian soldiers and airmen are serving in Europe, alongside men from Britain and the United States, as part of an international force designed to deter aggression.

FRIENDLY NAVIES ON THE LAKES

The new situation in Canadian-American relations is strikingly demonstrated by the modification of the Rush-Bagot naval agreement in recent years.

The agreement as written in 1817 remained unchanged for 122 years. As we have seen, it was nearly snuffed out in 1864, and at various other times people on both sides of the Great Lakes recommended putting an end to it; but it survived. When Canada began to handle her own diplomatic relations with the United States, and so to speak inherited the agreement from Britain, the idea was mooted of altering its terms to fit modern conditions. There were discussions between the two countries in 1922, but nothing concrete came of them.

The first formal modification of the agreement came in 1939, on the very eve of the Second World War. The U. S. Navy Department had five vessels on the Lakes (all much larger than 100 tons). It had raised several questions about them, including whether they could be used for training, e.g., target practice; and whether they might properly carry 4-inch guns, which were larger than the 18-pounders allowed in the agreement. The State Department asked Canada's views, adding that it believed that it would be within the spirit of the agreement to allow war vessels to be constructed on the Great Lakes for ocean service, provided they were removed as soon as completed

and not armed until they reached the seaboard. Canada agreed to all these propositions.

The next modification was made at the request of Canada. By the autumn of 1940 the Dominion was deep in the Second World War and was making good use of the agreement that allowed her to build on the Lakes small naval vessels for anti-submarine work on the ocean. Canada now suggested that the two countries agree that ships built on the Lakes for ocean service might be fitted with armament, subject to its being "placed in such conditions as to be incapable of immediate use while the vessels remain in the Great Lakes" and to the vessels' being promptly removed from the Lakes when finished. The United States accepted this.

Next year the U. S. went to war; and it too found the Great Lakes shipyards valuable as a source of sorely needed naval vessels. But it found too that it was important that they should reach the ocean ready for battle against the submarines which were now active on the coast; so it asked its North American ally in February 1942 whether it would not be a good idea to allow such vessels to be fully armed while on the Lakes and to test-fire their torpedo-tubes and guns before leaving for the seaboard. The ally agreed, accepting also the American suggestion that this arrangement should "be effective only for the duration of the present hostilities". However, in 1946, after the war was over, the Canadian Government pointed out that the naval authorities in both countries regarded it as desirable that naval vessels be stationed on the Great Lakes for training purposes, and proposed that "the stationing of naval vessels on the Great Lakes for training purposes by either the Canadian Government or the United States Government shall be regarded as consistent with the spirit of the Rush-Bagot Agreement provided that full information about the number, disposition, functions and armament of such vessels shall be communicated by each Government to the other in advance of the assignment of vessels to service on the Great Lakes". The United States agreed, and concurred also in the Canadian proposition that it was "the spirit of the Agreement rather than its detailed provisions which serves to guide our Governments in matters relating to naval forces on the Great Lakes".

Thus far have we come. It is no small distance. In 1817 it was the letter, not the spirit of the agreement that mattered. Today, Canada and the United States have become allies. Their fleets are not objects of mutual suspicion, and the result is that each is prepared to see the other put as many ships at it likes on the Great Lakes. The Lakes, indeed, are today a great training area where both countries school the seamen on whom they rely to defend their common freedom.

A CENTURY AND A HALF

It is nearly a century and a half since the guns fell silent at the end of the last Anglo-American war. That war left behind it a heritage of mistrust and even hatred. Such things take time to die. We have seen that for the first sixty years or so of the hundred and fifty the undefended border of the orators is pure myth. During those years men on both sides of the border expected another war and prepared for it.

In spite of this, disarmament arrived in the fulness of time, and in time also the two erstwhile hostile nations grew first into friendship and, in due course, into alliance. It is really this evolution from bad to good that makes the Canadian-American experience important. We have had great advantages (notably a common language) and we cannot afford to look down our noses at Europeans and Asiatics who have not achieved so much. But we have done pretty well, all the same. This is by no means to say that we have solved all our problems. There will doubtless be plenty of difficulties in Canadian-American relations in the future, as there have been in the past; cooperation between two proud and independent nations, one of which has a dozen times the population of the other, will never be a completely simple matter. But on the strength of the record of the past we can face the future with good confidence.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Among the general books on Canadian-American relations are H. L. Keenleyside, *Canada and the United States* (New York, 1929; new ed., with Gerald S. Brown, 1952) and Edgar W. McInnis, *The Unguarded Frontier* (New York, 1942). The series *The Relations of Canada and the United States* (New Haven and Toronto, 1936-45) contains a number of excellent volumes; see particularly the summary volume, J. B. Brebner, *North Atlantic Triangle* (New Haven, 1945). J. M. Callahan, *American Foreign Policy in Canadian Relations* (New York, 1937) is rather disappointing.

These books contain little on the particular matters dealt with in the present pamphlet. Details and references to sources of information will be found in the following books and articles by the pamphlet's author: *Canada and the British Army, 1846-1871* (London, 1936); *The Military Problems of Canada* (Toronto, 1940); "An American Plan for a Canadian Campaign", *American Historical Review*, January 1941; "The Myth of the Unguarded Frontier, 1815-1871", *American Historical Review*, October 1950; "The Canadian-American Permanent Joint Board on Defence, 1940-1945", *International Journal*, Spring 1954. The treaties, etc., referred to are published in *Treaties and Agreements affecting Canada in Force between His Majesty and the United States of America* (Ottawa, 1927). The modern modifications of the Rush-Bagot agreement are in *Canada, Treaty Series*, 1940, No. 12; 1942, No. 3; and 1946, No. 40. A recent book of importance is Colonel Stanley W. Dziuban, *Military Relations between the United States and Canada, 1939-1945* (Washington, 1959).