

Canadian Unity

First prize (\$15.00), in the Branch 120, Canadian Legion essay contest, won by Irene Nelle.

Unity is important to every Canadian citizen and everyone should strive for that goal. I feel that disunity comes from misunderstanding, through ignorance of the facts and intentions, not from ill-will. If we all try to acquire a better understanding of the different racial and religious groups in our great country I'm sure that unity will quickly and easily follow.

Many will say there are a multitude of obstacles in the path of unity such as racial origins, religion, language, national ideas, public relations and many others. However, I am sure that not one of these is so great that it can not be overcome by common sense, patience, energy, and perseverance. The best way for people to get together is to have a common purpose and what better purpose could there be, than Canadian Unity.

Perhaps one of the greatest problems in uniting the people of Canada is that of racial differences. In Canada there are those of French descent, who constitute one third of the population of Canada and those of English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch, Ukrainian, Swiss and Indian descent — also many racial groups which I have not mentioned. All these go together to make the Canadian people.

The first people to inhabit Canada were the Indians and Eskimos. Next came the French traders and later the English traders. Soon both French and English colonies were set up along the St. Lawrence. After the Seven Years War, there was more immigration from the British Isles. Since the end of the Second World War many Europeans have immigrated to Canada from Displaced Persons Camps: some to join friends or relatives here and others to find opportunity. This has increased the continual if slow immigration of Europeans. However, nowadays few can say that they have the blood of only one country in their veins, for through the years the races have mingled. If this is the case then we are all in some way related through blood and so we should not feel prejudice against those who don't come from the same country.

Language is another problem in the union of the people of Canada. French and English are the two main languages spoken in Canada, although you can find practically every other tongue somewhere in this large country. If you look around to other countries of the world you will find that language is not as important as some people would lead us to believe. Most Belgians speak French but do not agree with the French in politics, national views, the conduct of war, or the interpretation of national affairs. Most Irish people speak English but I'm sure no one could say that there is a great deal of unity between England and Ireland. In a similar way the Americans speak English but do not understand the British people very well. Most South Americans speak Spanish yet they agree on few things. Yet if you

look at Switzerland you will see the other side of the story. Here three different languages are spoken, yet their national unity has remained firm for many years. You also see this in Russia for here a great many languages are spoken and taught in the schools, still, all these various people are united... (perhaps not voluntarily, but united.)

Religion is another of the problems of unity. As new immigrants came into the country they brought with them their religions until now there are more religions in Canada than I have time to list here. Some consider this the main difficulty in uniting the people of Canada. Many years ago there was fighting and bloodshed between the different religious denominations. There was persecution in almost every country and to almost every denomination. However, the fighting and persecution has ceased and there is religious freedom in most countries of the world. We each should learn and practice religious toleration. Our main duty is to practice our religion to the best of our ability, to prove the merits of one's righteousness, of honesty, of virtue, of charity and of justice. For we all as Christians should unite to fight those who oppose any form of religious belief. This task is a great one and needs the support of all Christians united.

There are many other obstacles on the path to the city of Unity. Many more than I have mentioned and there are many phases to those I have mentioned which I have not dealt with in this essay.

What can we do to make Canada United? Some have advanced the idea of fusion. The radicals of this group feel there should be only one race, religion and language accepted in Canada. I am afraid however that this would not be acceptable to the majority of Canadians and impossible to carry out. As far back as 1763 there have been two languages generally accepted in Canada, French and English. In English speaking schools, French is taught and in the same way English is taught in French schools. Both French and English is used in our government and on the radio. Neither group would be willing to give up their language and the confusion that would be created if this was attempted would be greater than its merit. Therefore we must accept Canada as at least bilingual.

Most people although true Canadians are proud of their ancestry, as who is not. I do not feel this pride detracts at all from Canada's greatness but adds to it. For an example take Canada's art. The art of the European countries has grown and developed through the ages and now the immigrants from these countries bring their ideas of art to Canada. Here, they are interwoven until Canadian art develops, comprising the best art of most of the European countries. It is the same with all types of Canadian culture. Therefore I do not believe that fusion would be the best means of unity and I am sure most moderate Canadians would agree with me. They feel that each group's national identity should be maintained and that there should be equality and partnership for all.

American Music Teacher Member Old Glen Family

One of the fourth generation of the Williams family of Glen Williams, Miss Vera E. Board, died in Cleveland, Ohio, several months ago. She was the daughter of Lydia and Thomas Board, and granddaughter of Charles Williams.

At an early age, Miss Board showed a remarkable talent for music. After teaching school in the Glen for three years, her determination centered on having a musical career. She studied at the Toronto Conservatory of Music, graduated in voice, piano and theory and won the coveted gold medal. The giving of the medal has been discontinued since those days.

After years of preparing Canadian students for Conservatory examinations, she became a member of the teaching staff of the Ontario Ladies College. Far-off fields looked greener and she soon left for the United States, where she held positions in colleges and universities.

While at the Bristol finishing school in Washington, D.C., she was given time out for more study in Europe. She spent three years abroad, two at the Royal College in London and one year in France. Her summers were spent in travel. She returned to Bristol school and remained there until the school was sold. Her last position was in the Department of Music at Ohio University where she remained until her retirement four years ago.

Miss Board was an excellent teacher and a good disciplinarian. She looked toward the building of fine character in her students, as well as to their permanent musical education. Her fine sense of humour dulled the edge of her severity and kept her in the respect and confidence of her pupils.

Her great care through her long musical career was not to talk music to uninterested people, so she deliberately broadened her own outlook through the study of art, languages and literature.

Later in life, Miss Board's chief interest was in the political problems of the world. The daily reading of the Toronto Globe and the New York Times and many fine magazines kept her alert on world affairs. She remained a Canadian citizen all her life and her faith in Canada's future, never wavered.

If fusion is not the answer to national unity, what is it? I feel that unity can best be obtained by having a common purpose for which all should strive. And what should this purpose be? To make Canada a very prosperous and highly distinguished nation by taking the best of the various mother countries and adopting them to form an original civilization. If we all strive for this goal and remember that we are all Canadians no matter what country we or our parents came from unity is certain to come to us. It may be a long and difficult struggle, but the final result would be worth any amount of trouble.



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