

article in which the parties undertake to give sympathetic consideration to any representation the other party may make concerning any aspect of their relations. An initial five-year term has been suggested, and diplomats on both sides agree that it will take as long to measure the value of the agreement.

### Cynicism easy

What does it all really mean? At this early stage, it is easy to be cynical, but also superficial and premature. For instance, the parties have consulted at a high level twice a year for four years. Consultations will now become obligatory. Europe has long been a prime trade target, and missions, fairs and promotions have been regular. Even before the Link existed, three Community information-seeking missions had visited Canadian industries. Twenty per cent of the foreign-based trade staff are already situated in the Community. Now those activities will be backed by a piece of paper. The British and French have seen to it that existing and new bilateral agreements will continue as before. The Link will not supersede them.

One can visualize circumstances in which an obligation to consult on economic matters affecting each other might well prevent a serious deterioration in relations or a misunderstanding. And there is no doubt that the permanent mission of the Community in Ottawa is the fruit of the Link diplomacy, even if it is not part of the agreement.

Part of its role will be to facilitate activities under the agreement. Emphasis is being placed on its information activities. Four members of the total staff of 14 will be handling information. The head of mission is Curt Heidenreich of West Germany, who came to Ottawa from the mission in Washington.

Tangible examples of activities are readily forthcoming. The Europeans are looking to Canada for more clarification of the web of regulations and legislation governing commercial activity, and particularly investment. The Foreign Investment Review Agency is of concern because it is believed to operate with wide powers of discretion. (The Community represents 15 per cent of foreign direct investment. The U.S. has 80 per cent). Canada, to the European, is not unlike Europe to the Canadian, with its several jurisdictions and one central bureaucracy.

Europe is a continent without a vast store of raw materials. Canada's resources are attractive and the Link may eventually lead to better access to them. At present, it should be noted that Ottawa is very

conservation-conscious. It is more interested in identifying markets to help small- and medium-sized manufacturers finished goods win a larger stake in the world's biggest market. However, the interests could be complementary if exports of consumer goods could be made to expand at a substantially faster rate than those for raw materials.

The European interest is more economic, the Canadian mainly political. Canada will be left with its engagement with the Community at an early stage of development, which the U.S. does not need, and, perhaps, because of its sheer size does not need. The Link is thus merely beginning.

It is for Canada the most substantial exercise of the Third Option. It is an exercise in separate identity, a way to North American integration. It is an option that is based on European integration. Prime Minister Trudeau and MacEachen have both praised the idea of European unity.

Much more, the Link will improve Canada in that unity, or lack of unity, to the extent that it allows the Community to extend the level of its area of competence. This has been taken into account by the Commission in its support for the opening of negotiations. In many ways the appointed Commission is the enthusiastic arm of the Community, assisting as it does of committed European integrationists and idealists.

### Reservations remain

Canada must realize that Europe is not united and that grave reservations remain among its member countries about the pace of further integration. Those reservations could extend to the pioneering exercise in foreign relations that is about to begin. According to most reports, Europe has lost its vision. Looking ahead at the prospects recently, Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans reported: "Europe has to have lost its air of adventure." It is hardly a good omen for a third country seeking to embark on an adventure.

Yet many in the Community are attracted in a relation with Canada. They too are highly dependent on the militarily and economically, and so a version of relations may be welcome. There is a certain significance and the possibility of adventure for Canada in it. But the Link has totally failed so far to reach the necessary consciousness. Perhaps when the negotiations are completed — probably later this year — there will be some fanfare in Canada intended to convey the importance of the new conception.

*Bilateral agreements will continue as before*