

A SURVEY OF CANADIAN EXTERNAL POLICY

CHAPTER ONE

CANADA'S POSITION IN 1946

On September 4, 1946, Mr. L. S. St. Laurent,
(1)
then Minister of Justice, assumed the portfolio of
Secretary of State for External Affairs, thus inaugurating
a new era in which the Prime Minister no longer held the
post as had been the case since 1912. Mr. St. Laurent
had already had considerable experience as acting Secretary
of State for External Affairs, had been at San Francisco
and had headed the Canadian delegation to the first
meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in London.
On the day following Mr. St. Laurent's appointment the
Prime Minister announced the transfer of the Under-
Secretary, Mr. N. A. Robertson, to London as High Commis-
sioner; of the Associate Under-Secretary, Mr. Hume Wrong,
to Washington as Ambassador; and the return to Ottawa of
the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. L. B.
Pearson, to become Under-Secretary, the biggest shift of
senior personnel since the outbreak of war in 1939.
It was in keeping with the nature of the growth of the
Department and the intimacy and complete understanding
which characterized the relations of the three senior
officers who took up their new posts that no one ever
thought of preparing a formal letter of instructions for
the High Commissioner and Ambassador. Similarly it would
not have occurred to the retiring Under-Secretary to put
on paper an analysis of current problems and policies for
his successor. In Canada as in the United Kingdom a policy
of "solvitur ambulando" in foreign affairs had long been
regarded as natural and satisfactory. As Mr. Wrong remarked

(1) Mr. St. Laurent did not vacate this latter post
until December.