

from the best products of our universities. We have produced some outstanding political figures whose personal abilities have enhanced the influence of our country abroad, notably the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson. Our people generally have shown a sympathetic understanding of the problems of other countries.

But what about the regional dimension? The peculiar situation of Canada is that we are a nation with adequate capacity to play a very considerable role in a regional setting but, for all practical purposes, our immediate region consists only of ourselves and the United States, which is one of the super-powers. It has been shrewdly observed that we are a regional power without a region. Therefore, we must look further afield.

A realistic assessment of the national capacity of Canada in the various fields I have enumerated, combined with our situation next to the United States, leads inevitably to the conclusion that, if we are to advance our national interests and exercise real influence on the course of world affairs, we should do so in conjunction with other nations. Every Government in recent Canadian history has come to this conclusion. Whatever functional area one examines, it is impossible to envisage Canada making its weight felt with maximum effectiveness unless we get the co-operation of a number of like-minded nations.

In the economic field, Canada has for a long time pursued the so-called "multilateral approach" to world trading problems. We have recognized that, in the face of our overwhelming economic involvement with the United States, it is in our interests, and those of the international community as a whole, to encourage the development of a liberalized multilateral world-trading system, rather than an autarkic or bloc trading system. So, we have been strong supporters of GATT and the IMF. When trading blocs like the European Economic Community have developed, we have tried to ensure, by acting in concert with other countries that face similar problems, that the new economic groupings follow the principles of GATT and are not inward-looking and exclusive.

In the military field, a feature of the Canadian answer to the problem of effectively ensuring our own security for the past 20 years has been to work with other middle powers in NATO. Since Europe is the place where a conflict, if not contained, could lead to a nuclear holocaust which would inevitably engulf Canada, we have supported and contributed military forces to the security arrangements in which the countries of Western Europe have joined with the United States under NATO.

NATO, of course, is not just a military organization. Its members have been increasingly preoccupied with such problems as accommodation between East and West and with disarmament. For Canada, the opportunities our NATO membership has presented for close consultation with other middle powers have been of particular value in balancing up our rather unequal North American partnership with the United States. NATO is a unique form of close association with a group of other nations whose collaboration is important to the United States.