

*No unanimity
in Community
bureaucracy
on attitude
to Canada*

position has already been explained patiently and in detail in Brussels.

However, it seems that this feeling cannot be dispelled. Canada continues to be seen as lacking a uniquely Canadian position in GATT negotiations and as aligning itself with the United States without giving sufficient consideration to the Community's position or acting in concert with the Community. Canada's protectionism in agriculture and some industrial goods also conflicts with the Community's interests. Since the agreement was signed only recently, it is expected that these criticisms will end as the agreement is put into effect. In any case, opinions within the Community bureaucracy are not unanimous in their attitude towards Canada, and only a careful scientific survey (which has, unfortunately, not been carried out to this date) could provide, accurately and with all necessary nuances, information on the attitude of the Eurocrats.

Closest ties

Canada's closest ties among the major European countries are with Britain, which is still the main source of immigration to Canada. Trade exchanges with Britain are the third highest in all Canada's trade. These facts are well known. The intense co-operation between Canada and Britain at the ministerial and senior government levels is also an unquestionable fact.

Britain, with all of its ties with Canada, is the country most likely to be aware of the latter's needs, and in the best position to know what to expect from Canada. However, there is still too great a tendency to think that Canada and Canadian policy are clearly perceived in Britain. Indeed, one is often surprised to note that in some important British circles Canada is still seen in the outmoded image of a semi-colony.

Those who perceive Canada thus are not, of course, among those who come into direct contact with Canadian ministers and senior officials, but they are often influential in the economic and intellectual community. In this same milieu, I have been told, the road from Canada to Brussels, capital of the Community, passes through Washington. The Third Option policy has been deplored, Canada's hostility towards the United States criticized, and the advantages of free exchange with the U.S. extolled. This free-exchange option was precisely the one rejected by Canada when it adopted its present policy towards the U.S.

Since the time of Mr. Trudeau's visit to Paris in 1974, relations with France have,

as we have seen, taken a new direction. The trip made by Mr. Jamieson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, at the end of November 1976 afforded an opportunity for strengthening the ties of co-operation. Mr. Jamieson showed a great openness in regretting that contacts between Paris and Ottawa were not frequent enough at any level, even if they were only telephone contacts. It is clear that relations between French and Canadian leaders — especially senior government officials — are neither as frequent nor of as routine a nature as relations between Canada and Britain.

Then again, relations between France and Canada cannot be considered without taking into account the special character of direct relations between France and Quebec. These preferential relations, which over the past ten years made it possible for 38,000 persons in France and Canada to make exchange visits. The visits have been extended to all classes of people, but have been of particular importance in leadership circles in both countries. This must thus be considered without any doubt, many French citizens in positions of responsibility in the universities, in the economic and trade-union spheres, in administration and government, have a relatively good knowledge of Quebec.

But the advantage of this knowledge also has its drawback — the view that French leaders have of Canada is somewhat partial one, since they know Quebec more thoroughly than they do English Canada. The special tie with Quebec thus tends to slant their view of Canada towards the Quebec viewpoint. However, particularly since 1974 and since the desire to operate with Canada as a whole has been indicated by President Giscard d'Estaing, more direct contacts have been established between France and Canada, enabling French leaders to gain a more comprehensive view. For French leaders, Canada is an economic partner of great interest. The Third Option policy is better understood in France than in other European countries. It should be noted that the lifting of the French embargo on a link between Canada and the European Common Market has certainly enabled relations along this line to be completely re-established.

A final serious question to be asked with respect to French expectations towards Canada and Quebec is the question of what might happen in the event of the coming to power of a leftist coalition government in France. An interesting fact, which has been touched upon here, is that the French socialist party has in its ranks one of