



The Canadian delegation at the Plenary Session of the United Nations.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Geographically Canada is a North American nation; historically and politically it is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Canada's neighbours, north and south, are the two most powerful states in the world: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. To the east Canada looks across the Atlantic Ocean towards Great Britain and Europe; to the west across the Pacific towards Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Its territory lies in the path of the shortest air routes linking five continents.

Canada's economy is, by its very nature, dependent on extensive exports and imports. Roughly one third of its total production is regularly shipped abroad in exchange for the products of other countries. Clearly Canada has a vital interest in multilateral trade in a world at peace.

These are some of the underlying factors which set the pattern of Canada's foreign policy today.

Canada and the Commonwealth of Nations

Canada is an independent nation. This independence has been achieved by a gradual process of evolution, from colonial status in the mid-nineteenth century to complete sovereignty in the twentieth, with the full concurrence and encouragement of the British government at every stage. Canada formulates its own policies, negotiates and signs its own treaties, accredits its own diplomats and settles in its own right the issues of peace and war.

As a member of the Commonwealth, Canada is one of a

group of independent nations which at present includes the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon. During and after the First World War Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa developed rapidly under their new responsibilities and emerged as independent powers. India, Pakistan, and Ceylon became members of the Commonwealth after the end of the Second World War, while the Republic of Ireland, which under the name of the Irish Free State became a member of the Commonwealth in 1922, has withdrawn from Commonwealth membership.

The ties which hold the nations of the Commonwealth together are those of sentiment and common interest. They share a heritage of similar traditions and concepts of individual freedom, use British forms of government and law, and recognize the King as the symbol of their free association and, as such, the head of the Commonwealth.

Continuous consultation is maintained between member countries on matters of common concern, including all important developments in their international relations. The nations of the Commonwealth have High Commissioners stationed in one another's capitals, who keep in constant touch with the governments to which they are appointed. From time to time Commonwealth Conferences are held at which the Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, or Finance Ministers discuss matters of general policy. In addition, the Prime Ministers frequently communicate directly with one another on pressing current matters.

During the Second World War co-operation was particularly close. There was a constant exchange of officials, cabinet ministers and special missions between the member nations. Since the end of the war consultation has continued on a wide range of subjects.

Economic interests form a strong link; and trade with British countries is of great importance to Canada. The United Kingdom was until recent years the largest single buyer of Canadian goods. That place has now been taken by the United States, but the Commonwealth countries and British possessions still buy almost half of Canada's exports.

That this free association of nations is not in any sense an exclusive bloc was emphasized by Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King, then Prime Minister of Canada, in his address to the British Houses of Parliament in 1944.

"If the strength and unity of the Commonwealth are to be maintained," Mr. King said, "those ends will be achieved not by policies which are exclusive, but by policies which can be shared with other nations. I am firmly convinced that the way