

REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, 1956

I GENERAL SURVEY

Throughout 1956 international affairs were of compelling interest to Canada. In a varied series of important developments there were some surprises, some gains for the cause of peace and security, and some serious setbacks. In the chapters that follow the principal themes—and more especially those of particular concern to Canada—are briefly examined.

Though the cold war still goes on some advances in the broad field of economic well-being were made. As a result of a conference held in New York in September and October, the representatives of seventy countries signed the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Pending ratification, a Preparatory Commission will make preliminary arrangements for the establishment of the Agency, which, when in operation, will be in a position to assist a large number of countries. The Colombo Plan continued to be actively implemented. For its part, Canada increased its contribution to the Plan, as it did to the United Nations Programme for Technical Assistance. Progress was made by the six European governments concerned in the projects of a common market area and Euratom—the proposed European agency for co-operation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

The friendly and close character of relations within the Commonwealth was demonstrated in particular by the Prime Ministers' Meeting in London in June. The unhappy events which took place later in the Middle East imposed a severe strain for a time on those relations because of differences of policy between the United Kingdom and the three Asian members. Nevertheless there was a genuine desire on the part of all concerned to ease the strains and remove the differences. Progress has been made toward that essential objective.

Within the Commonwealth itself a number of changes have taken place. In March the Republic of Pakistan was proclaimed. Negotiations between the United Kingdom Government and representatives of Malaya resulted in the signature of an agreement under which the Federation would be granted sovereignty, with August 31, 1957 set as the expected date for independence. The Gold Coast, under the name of Ghana, will be granted independence within the Commonwealth on March 6, 1957. Legislation was passed in London to provide for a Caribbean Federation. Thus the Commonwealth continued to grow and adapt itself to changing conditions.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, too, was alert to new developments. From one point of view there was no change: the threat to the West remained undiminished. While, however, the military respon-