

A Canadian symbol celebrates its half-centenary

By Jenny Pearson



Canada House marks its fiftieth anniversary this summer and in doing so, it celebrates more than an official opening of an impressive Canadian centre in London by the then reigning monarch, King George V.

The purchase of its own diplomatic and trade quarters in London was for Canada also a modest symbol of its emerging independence, a roadmark along the evolutionary way to independence in foreign policy, which began imperceptibly with Westminster's British North America Act in 1867 but did not end until well into this century.

Canada House was officially opened on 29 June 1925. The Daily Telegraph that morning commented: The new building of the Canadian Government "typifies, both by its dominating position in Trafalgar Square and by the magnificence of its interior, the enormous importance that Canadian affairs occupy in London." The Times of the same date said the Canada House opening "marks an important development in inter-Imperial relations. Gradually London is receiving ocular demonstration of the importance of the Dominions. Such buildings as Australia House, Africa House and Canada House bring home to the average Englishman a realisation of the development which is taking place overseas." *Continued on page 14*

Considering the opening of Canada House in 1925 as a symbol of Canada's emerging independence, it is appropriate that today — 50 years later — the head of the mission should be a man who has been closely concerned with the development of modern Canadian foreign policy.

The High Commissioner, the Hon. Paul Martin, P.C., Q.C., (seen below right talking to one of the many visitors to Canada House), served as Secretary of State for External Affairs from 1963 to 1968. As such he headed Canadian ministerial delegations to NATO and to the United Nations, and could draw on his earlier experiences as a member and later chairman of the Canadian delegation to the UN.

A prominent figure in Canadian public affairs since his first election to the House of Commons in 1935, Mr. Martin's personal experience with foreign affairs began when he was a member of Canada's delegation to the League of Nations in 1938.

The High Commissioner at the time Canada House was opened was the Hon. Peter Larkin; (below left) who had built up a tea business, regarded as the biggest on the American continent, before entering public service.

