

REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, 1955

I GENERAL SURVEY

1955 was a year of continuing strains and tensions, of hopes and disappointments. It was, nevertheless, the first full year for a long time in which there were no large-scale hostilities. Peace was uneasy in the Far East and the Middle East, but it held.

There were other encouraging events, one of which was undoubtedly the holding of a very successful Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy. The chief international problem of modern times is how to control the use of scientific discoveries so that they may benefit and not destroy mankind. The discussions which took place at this conference in Geneva among scientists from all parts of the world have done much to make clear the possibilities (as well as certain risks) arising from an increasing use of atomic energy for industrial and other peaceful purposes.

There was also evidence during 1955 of the increasing realization by all countries of the disastrous nature of any policies which lead to all-out war, because such war has become a means to mutual annihilation rather than an instrument of victory. The recognition of these brute facts by the great powers at the Summit Conference during the summer was reassuring. It would have been more so had there not been subsequent evidence that the Soviet Union might be looking mistakenly upon this situation as one which permitted it to pursue its policies without fear of retaliation.

In spite of certain promising trends, the defence of freedom remains an essential preoccupation for Canada and the countries with which it is associated. For this purpose the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has continued to be the bulwark upon which Canada chiefly relies. The Canadian Government has continued to support NATO defence activities as well as to encourage the development of peaceful co-operation within the North Atlantic community.

Canada's firm belief in the value of the United Nations as an instrument for strengthening peace and security and improving international relations was demonstrated by continued active participation in the economic, social, and humanitarian work of the Organization and by several initiatives during the tenth session of the General Assembly, particularly in the fields of disarmament, the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and the admission of new members.

Co-operation among the nations of the Commonwealth continued to be a stabilizing influence in world affairs. Supplementing the continuous exchanges of information and opinion which are carried on through normal diplomatic channels, meetings of Prime Ministers are bringing together at frequent intervals in these difficult times those responsible