

REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, 1954

I

GENERAL SURVEY

The maintenance of international peace and security is, as the Foreword to last year's report emphasized, a paramount Canadian interest. Problems arising from the need to maintain peace with security were accordingly a major concern of the Department during 1954.

General war was avoided, owing in part to the self-restraint of the Western powers in the face of considerable provocation, and, it may be hoped, owing also to a growing realization in the Soviet Union and countries associated with it that the outbreak of another Great War would serve no useful purpose. If this realization prevails, and if the temptation to experiment with local aggression is more firmly repressed, the world may yet escape catastrophe.

East Asia continued to be the most disturbed area, though the chief dangerpoint shifted from Korea to Indochina. Discussions at the Geneva Conference, however, effected a cessation of hostilities in Indochina and enabled transfers of authority to take place in an orderly way under agreed international supervision. To assist in this work, Canada accepted the responsibility of membership on the International Supervisory Commissions there. About 160 Canadians, most of whom are from the Canadian foreign service and the armed forces, are employed in the work of these commissions in Indochina.

The situation in Europe for the greater part of the year was less tense than that in East Asia. Efforts devoted to the strengthening of Western co-operation resulted, after a period of uncertainty, in the replacement of the projected European Defence Community by a programme for a Western European Union, in which the democratic nations of that region will co-operate for the furtherance of the general security and welfare. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization will, it is hoped, be notably strengthened by the accession of the Federal Republic of Germany, and remain a bulwark for the maintenance of peace.

Support of the United Nations continued to be a basic aspect of Canada's external policy. Developments at this year's General Assembly encouraged the hope that some progress might yet be possible on disarmament, on the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and on certain other political questions. Meanwhile the United Nations served a useful purpose as a safety-valve and forum for discussion of various discontents, and as an instrument of international co-operation in the economic, social, and cultural fields.