

terdependence in the world. Canadian energies should not be wasted or efforts misspent on policies that give little promise of being achievable.

In examining the options before us, therefore, we must necessarily focus on those areas of the Canada-U.S. relationship where movement is not foreclosed by factors about which nothing can be done.

III. The Options

This is not the first time Canadians have asked themselves which way they should go. The factor of geography remains a constant element in the equation. The disproportion between Canada and the United States in terms of power has not changed all that much. The continental pull itself has historical antecedents. The pursuit of a distinctive identity runs through the process of Canadian nation-building.

But if the signposts are familiar, the landscape is undoubtedly different. Many of the old countervailing forces have disappeared. The links across the common border have increased in number, impact and complexity. New dimensions are being added to the Canada-U.S. relationship all the time. On both sides, there is now difficulty in looking upon the relationship as being wholly external in character.

The world trend is not helpful to Canada in resolving this dilemma. For the trend is discernibly in the direction of interdependence. In the economic realm, in science, in technology, that is the direction in which the logic of events is pointing. In Canada's case, inevitably, interdependence is likely to mean interdependence mainly with the United States. This is a simple statement of the facts. It does not pretend to be a value judgment. In point of fact, the balance of benefits of such a trend for Canada may well be substantial.

But this evades the real question that looms ahead for Canada. And that is whether interdependence with a big, powerful, dynamic country like the United States is not bound, beyond a certain level of tolerance, to impose an unmanageable strain on the concept of a separate Canadian identity, if not on the elements of Canadian independence.

To pose these questions is simple enough. To propound answers to them is more difficult because any answer is likely to touch on the central ambiguity of our relationship with the United States. The temper of the times, nevertheless, suggests that Canadians are looking for answers. It is also apparent that many of the answers are in Canadian hands. This is because few of

the problems engendered by the relationship are, in fact, problems of deliberate creation on the U.S. side. They are problems arising out of contiguity and disparity in wealth and power and, not least, out of the many affinities that make it more difficult for Canadians to stake out an identity of their own.

Three courses

The real question facing Canadians is one of direction. In practice, three broad options are open to us:

- (a) we can seek to maintain more or less our present relationship with the United States with a minimum of policy adjustments;
- (b) we can move deliberately toward closer integration with the United States;
- (c) we can pursue a comprehensive, long-term strategy to develop and strengthen the Canadian economy and other aspects of our national life and in the process to reduce the present Canadian vulnerability.

Such a statement of options may err on the side of oversimplification. The options are intended merely to delineate general directions of policy. Each option clearly covers a spectrum of possibilities and could be supported by a varied assortment of policy instruments. Nevertheless, the importance of the options notion is not to be discounted. For, in adopting one of the options, Canadians would be making a conscious choice of the continental environment that, in their view, was most likely to be responsive to their interests and aspirations over the next decade or two. Conversely, no single option is likely to prove tenable unless it commands a broad national consensus.

Seeking to maintain our present position with minimum policy changes

The first option would be to aim at maintaining more or less the present pattern of our economic and political relationship with the United States with a minimum of policy change either generally or in the Canada-United States context.

The formulation notwithstanding, this is not an option meaning no change. In the present climate, any option that did not provide for change would clearly be unrealistic. The realities of power in the world are changing. Some of the international systems that have provided the context for our monetary and trading relations in the postwar period are in the process of reshaping. The United States is embarked