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The Observer, a week earlier, said of the newly renovated building that "the High Commissioner's own room is of a spaciousness which might indeed be considered symbolical of the expanse of the Dominion itself." It also noted that the decision to acquire its own London office space had been a long time coming from the Canadian Government. "For more than twenty years Canada has had under consideration the securing of headquarters in London which should be worthy of her own importance and dignity."

Even then, the decision did not come easily in the Canadian House of Commons. The leasehold on the Canada House property was purchased from the previous occupant, the Union Club, in 1924 for £225,000. When the item to pay this and reconstruction costs—a total of \$1.3 million—in the Government's estimates went to the Commons in Ottawa for approval, it ran into considerable opposition.

The Opposition Leader of the day, Mr. Arthur Meighen, argued that the Government should hold off for a larger building, one that could accommodate not only the offices of the federal government but the provincial governments as well. "I would like to see them all together," he said, "and I would like to see a whole lot more cohesion in the representation of this Dominion in the capital of the Empire."

The Prime Minister of the day, Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King, defended his Government's decision by saying that Canada had been trying for "at least" twenty-five years to find suitable offices in London. (The Observer described the rented offices on Victoria Street previously occupied by the Canadian High Commissioner as "about as gloomy a set of chambers as could readily be discovered.") Now, said Mr. King, "Canada has been fortunate enough to secure what may well be regarded as the finest site in London, and, being in London, the finest in the world, for its offices in England."

He also noted that the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and British Columbia at that time had finer quarters than the Canadian Government. "A stranger visiting London today and knowing little about Canadian affairs might think from the accommodation enjoyed by the respective governments, that Canada was a part of British Columbia instead of British Columbia being a province of the Dominion," Mr. King said. The acquisition of Canada House would correct this state of affairs.

The warmth of the relationship between Canada and Britain, then as now, was evident in the ceremonial opening of Canada House on 29 June 1925. King George V and Queen Mary rode in an open horse-drawn carriage along the Mall

from Buckingham Palace into Trafalgar Square for the occasion, cheered by noon-hour crowds. With a key made of Canadian gold, the King unlocked the bronze doors. Later he told the glittering audience inside: "Canada is a great country... and it is right and necessary that its official representatives here should be housed in a manner worthy of the Dominion."

The development of an independent Canadian foreign policy however, still had some way to go from that brilliant day, as former Prime Minister L. B. Pearson, himself a worker in Canada House in days to follow, noted in the first volume of his autobiography, *Mike*. (As for Mr. Meighen's hope that the provinces would move in with the federal government in London, this has not happened. The five provinces currently represented in London—British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia—still occupy independent quarters.)

Mr. Pearson observed that when he started his long career in the Canadian Department of External Affairs in 1928, "the transfer of control over Canadian foreign policy from London to Ottawa had not been completed." But it was well under way and it continued to gather the momentum begun during the First World War, which proved a turning point in Canadian foreign policy development. At the insistence of the Canadian Prime Minister of that time, Sir Robert Borden, Canada and the other dominions were represented separately at the Paris peace conference and separately signed the resulting agreements. Canada also became an independent member of the League of Nations.

Another Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, proved to be a major opponent to the 1921 declaration of the British Prime Minister of that day, Lloyd George. Speaking of the emerging independence of the dominions in foreign policy, he said: "You must act through one instrument. The instrument of the foreign policy of the Empire is the British Foreign Office." Mr. King and other dominion leaders specifically rejected this idea of a single imperial foreign policy at the Imperial Conference in London two years later.

At the 1926 Imperial Conference—a year after the opening of Canada House—the Balfour Declaration agreed that the future would be based on co-operation between free governments within the Commonwealth. The process of evolution toward equality of standing within the Commonwealth was officially completed for Canada, in the view of most historians, with the passage of the Statute of Westminster in 1931.

Since the Second World War, Canadian foreign policy has grown in independence. It reached some sort of climactic level in 1956 with Canada's open opposition to the British-French invasion of Suez. As its central purpose, Canadian foreign policy

has, however, been as co-operative with British and other nations' international purposes as in the past. The focal point has been the maintenance of peace, through a variety of policies, from collective security to international development aid.

So it is that Canada House, fifty years ago a hopeful symbol of a foreign policy still emerging into independence, can now at its half-centenary be seen as evidence not only of Canada's continuing independence, but of its continuing recognition of the growing interdependence of today's world.

Most modern mint opens

A new Royal Canadian Mint with the capacity of producing 500 million coins a year on a single-shift basis is nearing the final stages of completion. First coins are already rolling off the presses, although the official opening is not scheduled until mid-summer.

Kenneth Grant, the mint's director, says: "This should be the most modern mint in the world. We availed ourselves of the latest equipment and technology we could find."

The plant, built in conjunction with a 12-storey office building in a Winnipeg suburb, is almost totally automated. The various metals and coins are shuttled throughout the plant by way of electronically-controlled boxes, and overhead and floor-level conveyor belts. If necessary, it could produce up to one billion coins annually on a double-shift basis. In contrast, the established mint in Ottawa would have to work three shifts a day to achieve a comparable production level.

The mint has also been planned with an eye to the convenience of visitors. A moat and artificial lakes surround it while the interior contains a courtyard reception area, a theatre to show a film on the plant's operation, a coin museum and viewing galleries with audio stations to explain various production stages.