

INTRODUCTION

The return of Prime Minister L.S. St. Laurent's government in the August 10, 1953 general election and the reappointment of L.B. Pearson to the External Affairs portfolio ensured the continuation of the close working relationship that had developed in the preceding years between the Department of External Affairs and its political masters. But while the department enjoyed the benefit of continuity at the political level it experienced several changes within its own senior ranks.

In July Dana Wilgress, who had been appointed Under-Secretary the previous year, left that post to become permanent representative to the North Atlantic Council in Paris. Hume Wrong, the Ambassador to the United States, was chosen to replace Wilgress as Under-Secretary. Arnold Heeney succeeded Wrong as Ambassador in Washington. Wrong, at the time of his appointment, was unwell and did not take up his duties until November 1. He served only two weeks before his health failed and he died in January 1954. In Wrong's absence Charles Ritchie, the Deputy Under-Secretary, headed the Department in an acting capacity. Another change was the appointment in October of John Holmes as Assistant Under-Secretary. He replaced Jules Léger who became Ambassador to Mexico.

An important focus of plans for the establishment of new missions abroad was the Middle East (Chapter I). The accreditation of an Israeli minister to Canada and the need for the government to take positions on Arab-Israeli issues at the United Nations contributed to the Department's desire to create its own means of assessing developments in the region.

The conflict in Korea continued to be one of the government's leading international priorities (Chapter II). Before the armistice agreement was concluded on July 27, External Affairs reflected on the collective security implications. A departmental paper (document 53) observed that although it had been hoped that the experience would strengthen the principle of collective action through the United Nations, there was pessimism about the results. Since Canada lacked the capacity to influence the behaviour of the opposing powers, the United States, around which the United Nations forces had been arrayed, had been the principal focus of its diplomacy. Ottawa's influence on American policy, however, had been limited, leading to the conclusion that there was a need for more effective arrangements for consultation among states participating in collective action.

Other items on the United Nations General Assembly agenda were of less immediate concern to Canada (Chapter III). Consequently, the Canadian delegation played a less prominent role than it had the previous year. Among the subjects in which the delegation was primarily involved were personnel policy and the issue of Chinese Nationalist troops in Burma. The delegation was also actively involved in the discussion of disarmament, the Department of National Defence having overcome its earlier reluctance to participate in the development of Canadian policy on the subject. In April Dag Hammarskjöld was appointed Secretary-General following the resignation of Trygve Lie. Pearson was a leading candidate for the post, but he was vetoed by the Soviet Union (document 258).