

tacit political differences of opinion concerning the Common Market that existed between Canada and the United States remained below the surface, without adversely affecting relations between the two countries. Canadian membership in the Commonwealth and the specific relations that arose out of that membership encouraged this attitude on Canada's part. This partly explains why, during the Sixties, Canada remained on the sidelines and adopted a somewhat passive attitude in its relations with the European Community.

All through the preceding decade, the attitude of the Canadian Government towards the Common Market was linked to the problem of Britain's membership. While the Conservative Government of John Diefenbaker opposed British membership, the Liberal opposition, under the leadership of Lester Pearson, was in favour. Thus it was only after the signing of Britain's membership that the enlarged European Community raised "questions of the highest importance" for Canada.

It is appropriate to emphasize at this point that Britain's membership is, over the long term, modifying relations between The Nine and Canada, which are in turn affecting the links between Canada and the United States. The present Canadian Government has, since the beginning of the Seventies, begun to develop a long-term external policy to protect national interests and to reduce considerably the country's vulnerability to outside influences. The "three options", the third of which was adopted officially by the Canadian Government, reflect a logical development of external policy based on the new situation resulting from Britain's membership. The years 1974 and 1975 saw considerable development of the Third Option. In addition, the Federal Government has repeatedly stated that the Third Option in no way represents an anti-American attitude but rather Canada's desire to embark on a new stage in Canadian-American relations. Allan MacEachen, then Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, declared in 1975 that it was not an anti-American option but one that took into account the fact that Canada's links with the United States were of prime importance in its relations abroad.

In order to achieve the objectives of the Third Option, the Canadian Government has been increasingly active since 1973 in broadening relations with the European Communities. By establishing a separate Canadian embassy to the Communities in Brussels, Canada has, *de facto* and *de jure*, recognized the new Europe,

and is maintaining diplomatic relations with it. The Prime Minister of Canada has made official visits every year since 1974 to The Nine, emphasizing his Government's desire to pursue the objectives of the Third Option. Among these objectives, the following should be mentioned:

- (1) The establishment of contractual relations between Canada and the European Community;
- (2) recognition by the new Europe of the distinctive character of Canada and the Canadian people as a separate political, economic and socio-cultural entity in North America;
- (3) modification of Canadian relations with the United States, in order to ensure independence within a context of economic interdependence.

Thus, the Third Option becomes a long-term strategy signifying the initiation of a new phase in Canada's relations with its Atlantic partners.

Affinities

It is also important to emphasize the economic and trade bases of the Third Option. From a historical point of view, it is clear that there is no other country outside the European continent having as many affinities with France and Britain, the pillars of the Common Market, as Canada. In the eyes of European governments, and in European public opinion, Canada is not only a vast country forming an integral part of Western civilization but it is also a modern state that, in its twentieth-century history, has made a generous contribution to saving Western freedom from totalitarian regimes. Need we emphasize that today about 45 per cent of Canadian immigrants are of European origin?

But, beyond the affinities of history, culture or language, there is a special aspect to Canadian-European relations in terms of economic and trade ties. From this point of view, it should be mentioned that the Europe of The Six was a less important partner during the Sixties than were the United States, Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth. Japan as well was, particularly for the Western provinces of Canada, a much more important trading partner than West Germany, France or Italy. We note, however, that, since the Kennedy Round, Canadian exports to The Six have increased at a much faster rate than its exports to Britain. The fact that the Common Market had succeeded in increasing its power of attraction for Canada also encouraged a favourable Canadian attitude towards British membership.

*European
public opinion
sees Canada
as modern state*