

Norman Robertson, recommended a reciprocal trade agreement with the United States as a means of strengthening the dollar position and avoiding undue reliance on the Europeans, who were themselves contemplating a customs union agreement. It is hard to see how this remedy could have had the desired effect, but it is revealing that this most respected of diplomats looked to a much closer integration of the North American economy (Document 894).

The role of the United States in the shaping of external policy, however, should not be over-dramatized. "We were all Atlantic men," recalled diplomat Charles Ritchie,<sup>11</sup> and by that he meant that Canadian interests and attitudes were concentrated on the United States, of course, but also on Britain and Western Europe. It was said occasionally by policy-makers that Canada was a Pacific power, but it was not. To a remarkable extent, indeed, the focal point of Canadian diplomacy remained as ever in Britain. Whitehall was the source of most of Canada's intelligence in international affairs, and Britain was Ottawa's best channel into the deliberations of the bigger powers. But there was much more to it than that. "The vast majority of those living in the northern half of North America," Kim Nossal has said, "had always felt the transatlantic ties of birth, family, national origin, politico-cultural inspiration, commercial intercourse, and even, it has been argued, psychological dependence."<sup>12</sup> This was less true, relatively speaking, by 1947, but King was not alone among politicians and officials who valued the British connection not simply for its own sake but because it countered the considerable punch of the United States. He was not the only one to be concerned about American activity, for example, in the Canadian Arctic. And the old desire to reconcile the needs and policies of Great Britain with those of the Americans — just so that Canadians could live at peace with themselves — was as strong in the new men as in the old.<sup>13</sup>

King in fact was influential still, suggesting further continuities in Canadian foreign policy. St. Laurent and Pearson controlled detail and decision-making day-to-day, but the Prime Minister could make his presence felt when he thought the occasion warranted. He did so over the Korean issue, and at a crucial moment in the economic negotiations with the British late in the year. King liked to complain that External Affairs had "become so infatuated with having to do with world conditions that they are fast losing all perspective in regard to national affairs" (Document 582), but the domestic content of foreign policy remained high, as a reading of the UNRRA section of Chapter VIII on the United Nations will starkly demonstrate. The apparently mundane politics of food and fish play an important and easy to overlook part in this book.

The Department of External Affairs was growing and changing dramatically. The number of officers went up by thirty per cent to 175 during the year, and the

<sup>11</sup>An address to "Canada, the United States and the Atlantic Alliance," a conference at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Toronto, April 1987.

<sup>12</sup>"A European Nation? The Life and Times of Atlanticism in Canada," in John English and Norman Hillmer, eds., *Making a Difference? Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order* (Toronto, 1992), p. 81.

<sup>13</sup>J.L. Granatstein, "The Anglocentrism of Canadian Diplomacy," and Norman Hillmer, "The Canadian Diplomatic Tradition," in Andrew Fenton Cooper, ed., *Canadian Culture: International Dimensions* (Waterloo and Toronto, 1985), pp. 27-43 and 45-57 respectively.