

It emphasised our internal conflicts, exaggerated our differences and largely ignored the extraordinary degree of common thought and common interest that really pervaded the whole area. The rest of the world was either irrelevant or too weak to concern us. We could afford to quarrel among ourselves, and we did not fail to do so.

All this has rather suddenly changed. We are now challenged by an external coalescence of power - military, economic and ideological - that seriously threatens our physical security and our established way of life. We are becoming aware of our common heritage and interests, and that we are a community.

Canada obviously belongs to this community. We started as an outpost of Western Europe; during the 19th century we began to grow into this community; now we are an integral part of it. But this is only one of three overlapping communities membership in which strongly affects the course of our development. We are part of the community of North America, the community of the Commonwealth, and the community of the North Atlantic. In economic affairs our North American relations are by far the most important. A generation ago the well-being of the Commonwealth community ranked a close second in its importance to us. Now we realize, as a result of the decline in the relative position of the United Kingdom, that the restoration and maintenance of a viable Western Europe is for us a major national interest. All three of these associations are important to us. Concurrent membership in them sometimes presents problems of reconciliation of interests, but fundamentally they do not conflict. It seems clear to me, indeed, that strengthening and enriching the community of the North Atlantic is the best way to guarantee that our Commonwealth associations will grow and flourish.

Our close economic integration into the North Atlantic community is so apparent that it needs no extended demonstration. Our whole economic history has been a story of expansion in response to the requirements and the resources of the North Atlantic area. Fish and furs, lumber and wheat, newsprint and base metals - all have been developed and conditioned by our North Atlantic circumstances. Of our exports, 80 per cent find their home in this area, and 90 per cent of our imports come from within it. Our total trade outside this area is important in absolute terms and for particular industries and regions. But valuable as our trans-Pacific trade has been, Vancouver's growth in response to the Panama Canal, which provided access by water to the North Atlantic, far exceeded that created by trans-Pacific traffic. Practically all imports of capital and by far the greater part of our immigration have been transfers within the North Atlantic group, and the basic structures of all our transport and communication systems fit in to a North Atlantic pattern. While we have interests in the Pacific in no substantive sense are we a Pacific power.

The integrity of Canada as a national community depends upon the preservation and well-being of both the Commonwealth and the North Atlantic community. In the decades between the two wars, the United Kingdom and the United States each took about one-third of our exports, and the remaining third was about equally divided between