

In the week before that meeting the Minister of Trade and Commerce and I went to Washington to hold preliminary informal discussions with Mr. Dillon and also with Mr. Anderson, the Secretary of the Treasury. These talks were most constructive. In the course thereof the United States Secretaries assured us that they shared our concerns regarding access to European markets, not only for manufactured goods but also for materials and food-stuffs in which Canada is particularly interested.

Immediately the Canadian Delegation arrived in Paris we had useful talks with the French authorities and valuable discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade.

Thirteen, as we ourselves had feared, turned out to be an unlucky number. The thirteen were made up of two from North America, five from The Six, five from The Seven, and one so-called "European neutral". This left seven European countries off the invitation list, and very naturally most of them were dissatisfied and critical. The reason against a meeting of twenty was the feeling on the part of some European countries, who were dissatisfied with the recent role of the OEEC, that such a meeting would be considered as a meeting of the OEEC itself.

Nor were these seven the only countries in the world that were perturbed by the course of events. As the date for Paris drew near the Canadian Government received inquiries and representations from a number of other governments, some in the Commonwealth and others outside. All of them were worried by the possibility that important movements were on foot, and important decisions were to be taken, in which their interests were involved but in relation to which they had no direct voice. These governments may rest assured that in the recent meetings the Canadian Delegation did all that it could, and not without some success, to ensure that their interests were not neglected.

These representations served to remind us vividly of the dangers and damage that could attend restrictive regionalism, whether in Europe or elsewhere. Political and commercial interests go hand in hand. The most constructive, least divisive, solutions for commercial problems are to be sought not by one region of the world seeking insulation from the rest, but in arrangements that can encompass all free nations on a basis of harmony and equality.

It may simplify matters at this point if I explain that in Paris last week there were in fact three successive, and in a sense quite separate, meetings, and that three themes ran through all three of them. The first meeting was of the thirteen; the second was of the twenty, as independent equals; the third meeting was of the OEEC Council, where all twenty were present but where Canada and the United States were only associate members, without voting rights and without obligations. This was the first occasion on which Canadian ministers had attended an OEEC meeting. In the past Canada's representation has been by officials rather than ministers.