

Objectives viewed as too vague in Ottawa's approach to Europe

By Claude Lemelin

Canada's External Affairs Department, fortunately showing greater modesty than the Nixon administration, held its "Week of Europe" early in November 1973. Sir Christopher Soames, vice-president of the European Community's Commission and the man in charge of the Community's external relations, was in Ottawa on November 1 and 2 with an important delegation of "Eurocrats", holding talks with External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp, Industry, Trade and Commerce Minister Alastair Gillespie, Finance Minister John Turner and Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Donald Macdonald.

At the same time, a delegation from the European Parliament was holding a joint meeting with the External Affairs Committee of the House of Commons and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate on Parliament Hill. The Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA), in co-operation with the External Affairs Department and the Commission of the European Community, sponsored a three-day conference on Canadian-European relations at the end of the same week.

These events most opportunely put

Since June 1972, Claude Lemelin has been the Ottawa-based Parliamentary correspondent for Le Devoir. Before assuming this post, he was a leading editorial writer for Le Devoir, and he continues to contribute regularly to that paper's editorial page on national and international affairs. Mr. Lemelin, who holds a degree in political science from the University of Ottawa and an MA in economics from McGill University, joined Le Devoir in the fall of 1970 after serving as economics correspondent for CBC Radio Canada in Montreal. He is a regular contributor to CJOH-TV and has commented on national and international questions for the CBC French- and English-language radio and television networks. The views expressed in this article are those of Mr. Lemelin.

in the limelight Canada's European — a facet of Canadian diplomacy destined to take on increasing importance in coming years if the diversification of Canada's external economic relations provided for in Mr. Sharp's "third option" carried out. (This option, described in a major study of Canadian-U.S. relations the minister released in October, called for Canada to pursue a comprehensive, long-term strategy to develop Canadian economy and other aspects of Canada's national life. The study concluded that this "third option" — a dialogue proposed to a standpat position or integration with the United States — represented the one best calculated to serve Canadian interests in the face of the pull of continental forces.)

Psychological barriers

In particular, Sir Christopher's visit to have given new impetus to the *prochement* between Canada and Europe that Ottawa would like to further. Perhaps in a few months or years, we shall see the removal of the psychological barriers of November 1973 after the removal of political obstacles represented by the mention of Canada as a separate power in world trade with which the European Community should set up constructive dialogue — a specific mention cited in a communiqué issued by the Nine after the summit conference in 1972. This psychological *rapprochement* was even more visible among the members of the European Parliament, since its delegates arrived in Ottawa still stunned by the acrimony of its talks in Washington. The members of the U.S. Congress and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. The meeting took place just after the fourth year of the Israeli war had created serious tensions between Europe and the United States. One member of the European Parliament laughingly told the Canadian Senators and MPs that they did not have to be handsprings to demonstrate that Canada was a power distinct from the United States.