

1946
—
1957

EXPANSION AND RECRUITMENT

Canada emerged from the Second World War stronger and more united than ever, while much of war-ravaged Europe and Asia struggled to rebuild. Recalling the world's hesitant response to economic depression and the rise of fascism in the 1930s, Canadians and their leaders were determined in 1945 to participate in shaping the world in which they lived.

The new order was reflected in changes at the top. In September 1946, an aging Prime Minister King turned the Department of External Affairs over to his Quebec lieutenant and favoured successor, Louis St. Laurent. At the same time, Pearson returned from Washington, where he had been serving as ambassador, to become under-secretary. Two years later, when King at last retired, St. Laurent succeeded him as prime minister and Pearson, joining the Cabinet, took over as secretary of state for external affairs. This duo, who would dominate the Department and Canadian foreign policy until 1957, shared a passionate commitment to a responsible and active internationalism.

Under Pearson and St. Laurent, the Department grew by leaps and bounds as Canada shouldered the international obligations expected of a country of its size and wealth. Building a new world order spawned a host of international organizations, including the UN and its various bodies. In January 1948, General Andrew McNaughton was appointed Canada's first permanent delegate (later permanent representative) to the UN in New York. A resident mission to the UN's European office in Geneva was set up a few years later.

The UN's early promise, however, faded as the Communist Soviet Union and its East Bloc allies confronted the Western democracies in the burgeoning Cold War. The mounting tension gave Eastern Europe,



³¹ The UN proved an insufficient guardian of international security in the face of Communist aggression in the 1940s. One of the first democracies to seek a regional security agreement, Canada played a leading role negotiating the North Atlantic Pact. Hume Wrong, Canadian ambassador to the United States, signed the treaty for Canada in April 1949. (Source: Harris-Ewing, Library and Archives Canada, PA-124427)

³² Decolonization heralded the emergence of the multiracial Commonwealth and prompted Canada to extend its diplomatic reach to Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. One of Canada's most important partners in the 1950s was India, where High Commissioner Escott Reid, shown here with Indian Foreign Minister Krishna Menon, worked hard to develop a "special relationship." (Source: Gopal Chitra Kuteer, Library and Archives Canada, PA-212088)