

decisions have been reached, and sometimes while various options are still open, it is important to submit them to public examination to see if they command the public support because, in the long run, public support is the only guarantee that an international commitment will be honoured. To submit a tentative proposal or options being examined helps the Government make up its own mind and enables the public to take part in the decision-making process.

In the paper on Canada-U.S. Relations published last October in *International Perspectives*, for example, the Government came out in favour of what has been termed the Third Option. I confess that there were some misgivings in government circles about opting for any particular direction in our relations with the United States. Why take a public position? Why not play it by ear? Why not leave all options open? Why give the Opposition something else to criticize? After all, it was argued, we have got along for years without any such statement of policy. Remember what that durable practitioner of the political art, Mackenzie King once said: "I made only one memorable speech in my career and I always regretted it."

It was tempting politically to follow this cautious advice but we finally came to the conclusion that a sense of direction had to be given to our relations with the United States. Economic integration with the United States as a direction of policy we ruled out as unacceptable to the Canadian people. The choice was then between continuing on a more or less ad hoc course, reacting to events in our great neighbour to the south, as we have been doing - with some success - or - and this is the third option - pursuing a comprehensive long term strategy to develop and strengthen the Canadian economy and other aspects of our national life and in the process to reduce the present Canadian vulnerability.

Is this the right direction for Canada? This Government thinks so. But do the Canadian people? That question can only be answered if it is put before the people. That is what we have done, just as Prime Minister Trudeau opted for federalism and invited the people of Canada in Quebec and elsewhere to follow him. Would it have been better for Trudeau and the Government to have blurred the issue as some of his critics did in order to leave all options open, such as special status for Quebec, the concept of two nations?

Surely there is fundamentally the same rationale for giving a sense of direction to foreign policy, particularly in relation to a great friendly giant like the United States beside whom we want to live distinct but in harmony.

In the address to the Associated Press last week Dr. Kissinger - inadvertently - underlined the very real significance of this third policy option to Canadians. First let me say that because of our close ties with the United States and the members of the European Economic Community, Canada welcomes wholeheartedly what appears to be a serious and constructive effort by the United States Government to open consultations designed to redefine and revitalize the Atlantic relationship. There are inevitably questions about