

leading up to the formation of the European Free Trade Area were of equal interest, since “the Seven” included Great Britain. Canadians were determined to preserve their traditional economic ties with the United Kingdom, but representations on pork products and frozen fish met with little success. Canadian concerns about the impact of these new trade groupings were shared by the United States. At the end of the year, American Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Douglas Dillon sought Canadian support for the transformation and revitalization of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation.

Relations between the West and the developing world were a focus of increasing concern for the Department of External Affairs. The “New” Commonwealth, the Middle East, and Indochina were well established as areas in which Canada took a deep interest, and in 1959 Canadian policy-makers also began to turn their attention to Africa (Documents 144, 454, 455) and Latin America. The Commonwealth was on the eve of dramatic change. Over the next decade, decolonization would result in twenty-five new members, and the implications of this anticipated growth were already being contemplated in Ottawa. Both Diefenbaker and Green remained firm believers in the value of the Commonwealth, and they were keenly interested in its future development. Cyprus’ potential membership in the Commonwealth was an issue of particular importance to Diefenbaker. Early in 1959, agreement was reached in London on Cypriot independence; questions remained, however, on whether an independent Cyprus would join the Commonwealth and, if it did, what its status would be within the association. Diefenbaker was especially troubled by suggestions that Cyprus might be invited to join on a basis of differentiated membership, that is with fewer rights than existing members. He cautiously agreed to British discussions with the Cypriots, but warned the UK High Commissioner that “the idea of a special form of membership seems to me to have serious implications for the future of the Commonwealth” (Document 117).

Escott Reid, the Ambassador to West Germany and former High Commissioner in New Delhi, put forward a number of suggestions about the Commonwealth’s role in the evolving postcolonial world. He wrote to Green that it could become a “firm bridge between the democracies of the West and the newer democracies of Asia and Africa” (Document 143). To strengthen this bridge, existing links were reinforced. Meeting in Jakarta, the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee agreed to extend the plan for a further five years beyond 1961 (Document 142). Initiatives in education, including the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship plan first contemplated at the 1958 Trade and Economic Conference in Montreal, were solidified at the first Commonwealth Education Conference, held in Oxford. Since the early 1950s, Commonwealth Finance Ministers had met regularly to discuss economic relations. In 1959, these meetings were formalized as the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council; lesser officials concerned with trade and finance met in the spring, followed by a meeting of Finance Ministers in September. These concerted