

Subsection 3.—Canada and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Within less than two years of the end of World War II in 1945 and the establishment of the United Nations, hopes of a lasting peace gave place to growing anxiety. The United Nations Security Council, which had been given responsibility for maintaining world-wide security, was deliberately prevented by the U.S.S.R. representatives from fulfilling this function. The Soviet Union maintained its armed forces after the War at a level that ensured to itself a preponderance of military strength in Europe. The Soviet Government blocked attempts by the Western Powers to reach a peace settlement in Europe and communist parties were used as an instrument of Soviet policy to sabotage Western European efforts at economic recovery and political co-operation. Under these circumstances, the countries of the Atlantic community felt themselves in grave peril of Soviet aggression and communist subversion and therefore took special collective measures under the United Nations Charter to maintain peace.

The first step in this direction was taken in the spring of 1948 when Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom signed the Brussels Treaty establishing Western Union. On Apr. 4, 1949, as a result of negotiations between these countries and Canada and the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed at Washington, D.C. This Treaty was accepted by all major groups of opinion in Canada and was passed without a single dissenting vote in Parliament.

The original signatories of the Treaty were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. In September 1951 it was agreed that Greece and Turkey should be invited to accede to the Treaty and they were admitted in February 1952. In October 1954 a protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty inviting the Federal Republic of Germany to join NATO was approved together with related arrangements which provided for the establishment of a Western European Union (composed of the Brussels Powers, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Italy) and for the restoration of full sovereignty to the Federal Republic of Germany. These measures, designed to bring the Federal Republic of Germany into close and enduring association with the Atlantic Community of free nations, were adopted following the failure of the European Defence Community Treaty which was rejected by the French Assembly in August 1954. On May 6, 1955, the Federal Republic of Germany deposited in Washington its instrument of accession to the North Atlantic Treaty and thus joined NATO as its fifteenth member.

The terms of the Treaty and the organization of the Council and subordinate committees are dealt with in the 1954 Year Book at pp. 113-115. Developments up to mid-1958 are given in the 1955, 1956, 1957-58 and 1959 editions.

Developments during 1958-59.—The North Atlantic Council continued in permanent session at Paris under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, Mr. Paul-Henri Spaak. In October 1958, Mr. Jules Léger, the former Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, succeeded Mr. L. D. Wilgress as Permanent Representative of Canada to the North Atlantic Council.

During the period under review, five Ministerial meetings of the Council were held. In April 1958 a special meeting of Defence Ministers was convened in Paris to review the implementation of the important decisions taken in the defence field by the NATO Heads of Government at their meeting the previous December. In May, the Foreign Ministers of the NATO countries met in Copenhagen to discuss various political and economic problems of concern to the Alliance and, in particular, the important questions relating to a possible East-West Summit conference.

The annual meeting of the Foreign, Defence and Finance Ministers of the member countries was convened in Paris in December 1958. The serious situation created by the Soviet Union in announcing its intention of abrogating unilaterally the four-power agreements on Berlin was fully examined. Agreement was reached on the basis of the results of the Dec. 15 meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom,