



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

A report to the House of Commons on October 28, 1974, by the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

I wish to take this opportunity to report to the House on my trip last week to Western Europe. In doing so, I am very pleased to be able to say that, in both Paris and Brussels, I found evidence of considerable warmth towards Canada, considerable interest in Canadian attitudes, and considerable desire to seek a convergence of interests. I can assure this House that in those places and within the international organizations sited there, the reputation of Canada is high. I can assure the House equally that there exists within the Governments of France, Belgium and Luxembourg a genuine and wholesome appreciation of the reality of Canada.

It goes without saying that the discussions in Paris with President Giscard d'Estaing and with Prime Minister Chirac and other ministers took place against a background of deep historical bonds and a shared culture of considerable richness. Of equal importance, however, they took place in an environment that acknowledged the distinctiveness of the Canadian entity and the modernity of Canadian accomplishments. There was evident in those meetings a will to deal practically with issues -- a desire to co-operate rather than compete, to participate rather than withdraw, to consult rather than assume.

We agreed while in Paris to launch two bilateral working groups, each with an objective of identifying areas of fruitful co-operation, in order to increase and diversify our volume of trade. Each is to conclude its work in time to report to the Canada-France Joint Economic Committee at its next meeting, to be held in Ottawa in the first half of next year. One working group will concentrate on examining, without advance commitment, technological and trade-investment possibilities with respect to petroleum, gas, coal and nuclear fuels, taking into account matters of interest to both sides. The other group will examine the rather broader area of trade potential in industrial sectors and, in the first instance, would concentrate on the transportation industry, dealing with French interests in railways and in helicopters and with Canadian interests in STOL aircraft and in all-terrain vehicles.

An indication of the importance attached to these decisions was the agreement that the next Joint Economic Committee meeting take place