

Mr. Yeltsin: Our states are federative in nature. This creates unique opportunities for making the ties between our states better reflect the needs and aspirations of our people. Russia is very interested in studying Canada's experience in managing relations within a federation. We will learn from you how to solve problems in a civilized way through negotiations.

And now a few words about the problems facing the Commonwealth of Independent States of the former union, which are causing many people around the world to worry. This unique intergovernmental organization is currently in the building stage. But it has already proved itself to be a working mechanism for finding the most acceptable form of mutual relations between the republics. At the same time, a process is under way in the Commonwealth whereby republics are both falling apart and coming together. However difficult it may be for us to ensure that this highly complex process remains governable, the seventh and most recent meeting of the heads of government of these countries can be considered the most productive meeting in terms of results.

Respected parliamentarians of Canada, you have considerable opportunities for positively influencing the development of Russian-Canadian co-operation. As I have said before, the advantages to be derived from co-operating with Russia may not all be immediately apparent. They must be explained, but this will not be difficult in the new atmosphere characterizing our relations. I urge you to make active use of your opportunities in Parliament and in the ridings when speaking with the Canadians who elected you to actively promote the dialogue between Russia and Canada, between our peoples.

There is every reason to speak of fundamental national interests shared by Russia and Canada and of human aspirations shared by the ordinary people in our countries. This is what has enabled us, after decades of isolation, to base Russian-Canadian relations on a solid legal foundation: the Treaty on Concord and Co-operation which will be signed today. The community of interests of which I speak cannot be built on thin air. As you know, much is being done in both countries to ensure that it becomes a constant theme of the domestic and foreign policies of our countries.

Speaking from this lofty rostrum, I would especially like to mention Canada's active contribution to the development of the dialogue between us. We are grateful for the solidarity which the people and political leaders of your country showed for a democratic Russia in August. I remember the telephone conversation I had at that time with Prime Minister Mulroney. It had enormous significance, and Russians will never forget it. Russians know about it. Russians remember it, and will continue to remember it for the rest of their history.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: Your solidarity has continued in the form of Canadian economic and humanitarian assistance to Russia. We value highly the heroism of individual citizens and organizations, including the Salvation Army's renewed activity in our country.

Today it is no less important or urgent that we learn the language of mutually advantageous co-operation and partnership in business.

We have a clear vision of what we are striving toward in our country, in the world and in our relations with Canada. And many would do well to study the development of our relations.

Our intentions are not secret. We are prepared for hard work, which is the very essence of any partnership. We have a long and difficult road ahead of us. I am convinced that our peoples must travel together if they are to attain the best results.

I want to wish Russians and Canadians a happy journey and success in developing peaceful areas of mutual co-operation. Thank you.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Guy Charbonneau (Speaker of the Senate): Mr. President, Mrs. Yeltsin, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Prime Minister, *honorable collègues du Sénat et de la Chambre des communes*, distinguished guests:

[*Editor's Note: Mr. Charbonneau spoke in Russian.*]

We are honoured by your visit and very grateful that you have shared with us as parliamentary colleagues your international preoccupations and your determination to carry through the program of reform and restructuring upon which your country has launched itself.