

Community than if we were inside and a member. We are not involved in the preparations of the decisions, nor do we contribute to these decisions directly. In NATO, to give one example, we are a member of the Council, we know what papers the staff are putting up, we are involved in the discussions and we take part in the decisions. As soon as the Council is over, our Permanent Representative can immediately report to Ottawa what exactly has transpired, who said what, which particular positions were taken by which member country, and why.

When it comes to the Community, the situation is different. The Council meets sometimes in Brussels but often in other European capitals, and we can very often only find out what has happened by seeking out afterwards harassed officials who are trying very hard to figure out and record what transpired at the meeting they just attended; they are also trying to figure out how they will carry out decisions taken at these meetings and prepare themselves for the next steps that have to be undertaken. There are probably many dozens of representatives of other outside entities, like Canada, who are trying to have access at the same time we ourselves want to know what is going on. In these circumstances, there is a clear advantage in having an agreement with the Community that we are to co-operate and to keep each other informed as to what we may do or contemplate doing that may have an effect on the interests of the other. In a situation that is difficult to observe, where we have difficulty of access, a special pass, a promise that we shall be informed and, when appropriate, consulted, is of great advantage. I can assure you that the job in Brussels of keeping in touch with Community developments, of presenting Canadian views and, in some cases, trying to influence decisions and even to protect specific Canadian interests at the appropriate time, is greatly facilitated as a result of such an arrangement.

But this is merely by way of introduction. Let us now deal with matters of even greater substance.

In the first place, we have to remember that the Community is the largest trading entity in the world. It is, so far as Canada is concerned, collectively our second client, after the U.S. and, I believe, slightly ahead of Japan. It is clear, therefore, that the Community, both as a client for our exports and as a source for many of our imports, is of importance to us. Some of its decisions may hurt our export prospects, and in similar fashion some of our decisions may impact Community interests. It is, therefore, important that we should be in a good position to discuss these matters with the Community, in timely and effective fashion. Is it not obvious that, if the Community and we can agree and proclaim that we propose to do this systematically with a desire to promote our