

Mr. Speaker:

I have just returned from Europe, where I had the honour to accompany the Governor-General and Mrs. Michener on a series of official visits to The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Queen Juliana and the Prince of The Netherlands, the King and Queen of Belgium and the Grand Duke and Duchess of Luxembourg received Their Excellencies with great kindness. These visits served to underline the closeness of the bonds of kinship and affection between Canada and the host countries, bonds forged by a shared history, strengthened by comradeship in two world wars and maintained by our alliance in NATO. His Excellency reminded his hosts in all three countries of the contribution made by so many Canadians of Benelux origin to the development of Canada and the friendship between our countries. He stressed the growing importance of trading relationships and scientific and cultural exchanges. I am sure I speak for us all when I thank the governments and people of the Benelux countries for the warm welcome given to the Governor-General and Mrs. Michener wherever they went. Their Excellencies took advantage of their visits to The Netherlands and Belgium to join with their hosts in paying homage to the Canadian dead of two world wars by visits to Canadian cemeteries at Holten and in Flanders.

While in Europe, I had useful talks on a number of questions, including particularly the Common Market, with the Benelux governments, the Italian Government, members of the European Economic Commission and the Secretary-General of NATO. Our Ambassadors to France and Germany joined me for a day of discussions in Brussels, enabling me to have some contact with all six countries of the European Economic Community.

The principal subject of all my talks was the current negotiation for the enlargement of the Community. As the House is aware, the Government, through meetings at the Ministerial level, diplomatic representations and public speeches, has been making known over a period of many months Canadian concern about some of the effects of the anticipated enlargement of the Common Market. The Government is not opposed to the broadening and deepening of the Community; on the contrary, we see this development as an important contribution to greater stability and prosperity in Europe and the world. We have urged, however, that it is neither desirable nor necessary that this economic unification should take place at the