

Canadian interest in the enlargement of the European Community and our parallel goal of expanding relations with the Community have taken a number of forms. At the ministerial level there have been visits by both myself and by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce to Brussels and to other capitals of the member states of the Community. We have attempted — and I think with some success — to establish in the minds of the Community and of its individual members the distinctive character of our position.

These ministerial visits are complemented by increasingly frequent and regular contacts with the Commission at the senior official level and by parliamentary exchanges. I am very pleased that Sir Christopher is accompanied by a number of senior officials of the Commission who are holding bilateral official discussions with the Canadian side. These ongoing exchanges mark a further development in the dialogue between the Community and Canada.

Another important development in the maturing of our relations with the Community has been the appointment to Brussels of a separate ambassador as head of our mission to the European Communities. I hope it will not be long before this is reciprocated by the opening of a representation by the Commission in Ottawa.

In terms of trade and economic relations, we see a continual expansion of our relations with the European Community. We are working closely with the Community in international forums — particularly on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade — towards an even greater liberalization of world trading conditions. Both my colleague the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and I have been encouraged by the constructive attitude the European Community has been taking in the preparations for the forthcoming multilateral trade negotiations. This positive spirit is a good augury for future Community dealings with the rest of the world.

But there is an aspect of the Community's relations with the world that causes us some concern. This relates to the increasing number of preferential arrangements the Community has, or is negotiating, with a number of countries — in particular those that were formerly colonies of its member states — that discriminate against third countries, including Canada. We continue to believe that these arrangements require further attention.

However, I would not wish to exaggerate their importance. There are many other indications that the Community is and intends to become an increasingly responsive and outward-looking participant in world affairs.

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