

It is a privilege for me to be here tonight as your guest and a pleasure to be able to speak to you.

May I first offer my warm congratulations on this anniversary of your Society. The formation of your Society sixty years ago was a happy event that augured well for the continuing development of our country. In this centennial year all Canadians will feel pride in the thought that the Sons of Italy Society is today celebrating a Diamond Jubilee.

As Secretary of State for External Affairs, I, for my part, am particularly conscious of the debt we owe both to ancient Rome and to modern Italy -- a debt based, first, on the heritage of lawmaking, language and art and, secondly, on the creative and civilizing impulses of a country which has been forging ahead in such diverse realms as industry, style, and culture.

This is why I am particularly happy at our increasing ties with your mother country. Canada's links with Italy today -- in politics, trade, immigration and culture -- are many and varied. The atmosphere surrounding our relations is most cordial and our human ties are growing deeper year by year.

In the political sphere, consultations between Canada and Italy are close and frequent. Our history and circumstances differ, but we have much in common in our views on the nature of international collaboration and on the methods which should be used to solve current world problems. As a result, we naturally work together in international organizations such as the United Nations and within the Atlantic Alliance.