

On the contrary, it has often been a source of mistrust and disappointment. At the very time when France was rediscovering the French fact in Canada, our nation was searching for greater internal harmony. This rediscovery and searching collided, and when we look at this period today, we can only be surprised and saddened that we did not know how to take better advantage of that period.

By the early Seventies, we had developed political will to expand our trade relations because it was already clear, by and large, that they needed a major push. Was it ignorance, habit, apathy or oversensitivity that caused this will to be frustrated? In any case, it did not suffice merely to give the necessary impetus. So what we must do now is look closely at the obstacles to trade development and industrial co-operation between France and Canada in order to decide whether or not these goals can be met.

**Difficulties
due to
geographic
and historic
contexts**

In my opinion, our past difficulties are due in large part to the geographical and historical context in which our economies developed. Many Canadian and American businesses saw continentalism as the natural economic course. Especially since the Second World War, Canadians and Americans have woven a close network of contacts. We have sought industrial and technological co-operation and the rational division of labour in marketing and production. The advantages of such contacts must be evident to you French who have built a Common Market with your European partners.

While always subject to the pull of our single and giant neighbour, we Canadians have, nonetheless, resisted carrying economic integration in North America to the extent that you have in Europe.

But while we were hoping to establish closer links with Europe — both to offset the weight of our relations with a single partner and to respond to the distinct opportunities offered by your markets — the effect of European intergration has been to give us marginal status. The vast system of trading links that you established favoured trade within the European Community and trade between you and privileged partners such as the European Free Trade Association and the Lomé Group. Canada had no such luck. Moreover, when the United Kingdom joined the European Community in 1972, Canada lost the only preferential access that it had enjoyed to a European market, namely the Commonwealth trading agreements.

It was in this context at the beginning of the Seventies that we Canadians re-emphasized our political desire for closer economic ties with Europe. But that decade saw us compelled to establish new industries, to adapt to energy crises and to survive economic stagnation. We were not able to innovate as we should have. And we were too easily satisfied with a traditional trade with Europe that fluctuated according to circumstances. We neglected to foster those links between men, enterprises — indeed between generations — that had been the foundation of our economic relations with the United States. We gave up when confronted by markets reported to be impregnable. This was a question of determination, no doubt, but it was also one of priorities and