

and Latin America. Beginning now we will have exclusively a Canada/U.S. Bureau. And this reflects my awareness and that of the Government of the increasing complexity of Canada/U.S. relations and the number of vitally important decisions which we are going to have to make jointly, both of a bilateral nature, and as we become increasingly aware that we in this North American continent are going to have to act jointly on many multilateral questions as well.

It is these bilateral and multilateral questions that I would just like to touch on very briefly in the remaining time that I have before answering your questions. Bilaterally - let me begin by telling you how pleased we were with the outcome of the discussions between President Carter and my Prime Minister - which I was privileged to attend in Washington - and how I believe that those talks set in place the basis for a new and a closer working relationship. We have looked for many years on each side of the border for an appropriate mechanism for keeping in place the multitude of issues that arise between us. We have tried the structured form of communication and negotiation, but we have concluded, in the context of what I said a few moments ago with regard to the unique nature of Canada/U.S. relations, that a number of things are necessary and most importantly, our capacity to discuss and talk frankly and frequently about the range of subjects that arises and to do so in a way that will ensure that they don't reach the stage of becoming major irritants.

I think if one looks at the history of Canada/U.S. relations it will become apparent very readily that the majority of those matters which have tended, on occasion, to divide us, have arisen because there was a kind of benign neglect perhaps reflected in a mutual capacity for taking each other for granted, that allowed issues to bubble to the surface when they could have been dealt with very effectively and disposed of had there been the so-called early warning system in effect. And so we are now, I believe it's fair to say, in the kind of climate between our two countries where we can deal with these specific issues in the fashion that I have outlined. We also recognize that it is important that these bilateral issues be seen in their own context and not related one to another so that if we have a problem in a particular sector we deal with it rather than allow difficulties related to that particular issue to spill over, and indeed to cause difficulty across the whole spectrum of our relationships.

What are some of the things which illustrate this new approach? First of all, illustrating the closeness of our association and our ability to react to each promptly is perhaps the decision we were able to make a few months ago during your most severe and unanticipated cold spell, to provide for additional exports of gas and energy supplies to your country, for no other reason than that's the appropriate thing for a neighbour to do