

A significant step was taken in the summer of 1971, when my colleague Jean-Luc Pepin, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, led an important delegation of Canadian officials and businessmen to the People's Republic of China. This mission, the first Canadian Government mission to visit China, sought to establish close contacts with Chinese ministers, officials and business representatives in all spheres of economic and commercial activity. This objective was fully achieved. During the three working days the Canadian group spent in Peking, no less than 25 separate formal meetings were arranged with representatives of each of the seven state-trading corporations responsible for China's export and import trade, with the People's Bank of China and with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

Through firsthand contact with the Chinese economic ministries and with the foreign-trading corporations, the members of the Pepin mission were able to advise the Chinese in considerable detail of the range, variety and technical sophistication of the many products Canada could supply to the Chinese market. Much of this was new to the Chinese. A good deal of attention was also given to exploring with the Chinese those areas where they might expand their exports to Canada to the benefit of both countries.

The first mission quickly produced results. We agreed with the Chinese to exchange missions in areas of particular commercial interest to both our countries, to hold trade exhibitions in each other's country and also to hold periodic consultations on trade matters. In the course of this visit, Foreign Minister Pai Hsiang-kuo accepted an invitation to visit Canada with a Chinese trade delegation. From the Canadian viewpoint, one of the most significant achievements of Mr. Pepin's mission was China's agreement "to consider Canada first" as a source of wheat. Canadian traders and farmers could be well satisfied that the official phase of our trade relations with the Chinese had begun so well.

Political developments were equally important. At the United Nations General Assembly in the autumn of 1971, Canada supported the resolution calling for the restoration of the right of the People's Republic of China to the China seat in the United Nations. Canada's position was not only the logical consequence of our earlier decision to establish diplomatic relations; despite differences with some of our allies and friends, it was also in accordance with the desire of the large majority of countries represented in the United Nations. Canada was thus particularly pleased to join in welcoming Chinese representatives to the United Nations last year. Since then, at the United Nations headquarters in New York, in other international agencies and conferences, and in Peking and in Ottawa, Canadian and Chinese representatives have usefully consulted about everything from pollution to arms control. We do not always agree with the Chinese. Many times, our views are diametrically opposed. But even when we differ, we have found it possible to discuss the differences frankly, even vehemently. We have not found it necessary to cover up our differences or to talk around them. We have not had to pretend that the differences were not there, or that they could be ignored. It is no surprise that we differ, nor need this detract from the usefulness of meeting and exchanging views. Indeed, Canada argued that it was foolish and dangerous to exclude one-quarter of humanity from the counsels of the world, whether we agreed with what their