

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 rights 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 Government said or not. The candour of dialogue with the Chinese is a virtue in itself. We should not be discouraged from pursuing it by fears that we risk making matters worse by disagreeing with the Chinese as often as we do. Talking is better than fighting. The Chinese appreciate this as well as we do.

It was in this spirit that I undertook my recent journey to the People's Republic of China. My purpose was two-fold: to hold talks on bilateral and multilateral questions with the Chinese leaders and also to inaugurate our Solo Trade Exhibition in Peking. The Exhibition was the largest Canada has ever held abroad. I wanted to underline the importance the Government attached to it. And, as you know, it was a resounding success: 28 million dollars worth of Canadian goods were sold. Direct contacts were established between Canadian businessmen and representatives of Chinese trade corporations which will almost certainly lead to more sales.

By happy coincidence, China's Foreign Trade Minister Pai Hsiang-kuo arrived in Canada for a 10-day tour just as I entered China. During his stay, he was shown a good cross-section of Canadian industrial and technological capacity. Minister Pai inaugurated the Chinese Exhibit at the Canadian National Exhibition here in Toronto. You know what a remarkable success that exhibit had. The Chinese Trade Minister also met officials and representatives of all spheres of the Canadian business world. I returned from his country feeling that one more step had been taken in understanding China, its people, its way of life, its place in the world and what it expects of its contacts with other countries. I am sure he felt the same about his visit to Canada.

But what struck me above everything else in my talks both with Premier Chou En-lai, Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei and other high officials of the Chinese Foreign Ministry was the ease and candour with which we were able to exchange views even on fairly delicate subjects. I was determined from the start to be frank and open with the Chinese. I felt if we were to have a useful dialogue, we should both express our views clearly and have an opportunity of arguing about them. That is exactly how it happened -- as it turned out, the Chinese were astonishingly frank in their comments to me about international questions and about relations between Canada and China.