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## CANADA-FRANCE RELATIONS

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Relations between Canada and France are multiple and varied and encompass all sectors of activity in both societies. Based on history, they have been enhanced by events we have shared and enlivened by our common cultural heritage, and have made France one of Canada's most important partners.

Politically, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's visit to Paris in February 1986 and the success of the first Francophone Summit are proof of the new spirit of confidence that now permeates relations between Paris and Ottawa. Symbolic of this is the visit by the President of the Republic, 20 years after the de Gaulle visit.

Contact between the two governments is frequent, as evident by the many ministerial visits. In the past six months Perrin Beatty, Minister of National Defence, and Michel Côté, Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion have visited France, while French ministers of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Culture and Communications visited Canada last January. Prime Minister Jacques Chirac will also attend the Francophone Summit in Quebec City this September.

The quality of our bilateral relations is also evident on the international scene, where France and Canada participate in the work of several organizations. Be it in the United Nations, the Summit of the Seven, NATO or the OECD, the interests and viewpoints of our countries will often converge when they do not coincide closely, as in the case of our joint and exemplary action in *La Francophonie*. This cooperation is especially close now that preparations are being made for the Quebec City Summit.

The value of our trade with France surpassed the \$2-1/2 billion mark in 1986. Interchange between us has seen steady growth over the past five years, but government and business in both countries feel there is room for even more dynamic growth in our international relations, given the potential of the respective economies. When he visited Paris, in February 1986, Prime Minister Mulroney confirmed the Canadian government's intention to make

increased bilateral economic interchange a priority of Canadian involvement in France. As the Prime Minister stated, industrial cooperation and investment on both sides of the Atlantic will be the chief means of achieving intensified economic relations.

It was in this context that the Joint Economic Commission was held in January 1987, under the joint chairmanship of Michel Côté, Canadian Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, and Michel Noir, French Foreign Trade Minister. It was an opportunity to take stock of bilateral industrial cooperation projects. Mr. Côté also drew attention to the desire of Canadian companies to form partnerships with their French counterparts in the EUREKA projects. A significant economic and industrial cooperation agreement was signed as a result of the Commission's efforts.

A point of contention between the two countries continues to be fishing relations and delimitation of the maritime boundary off Newfoundland and St. Pierre-Miquelon. No permanent solution to these disputes has been reached in the numerous negotiating sessions held over several years. Discussion is continuing in order to settle this important issue.

The two countries are also involved in beneficial scientific and cultural exchanges. In the vast field of communications, the audio-visual sector has been especially productive, thanks to the joint film and television production agreements signed in 1984. Projects valued at more than C\$70 million have already been completed, while new ones worth C\$50 million are being studied. Interestingly, Vidéotron, a Canadian company, has acquired a share in the fifth French network. Like their European counterparts, Canadian television viewers will soon have access to TV 5, a new French network that will broadcast the programs of participating French producers (France, Switzerland, Belgium and Canada).

To pursue its programs in France, the government has a trade office in Lyon, in addition to its Paris Embassy. The Marseilles Consulate-General was closed on March 31,