

I believe we must capitalize on this commonality of situation, this mutuality of interest - both out of our narrow national interest and a recognition of the value of cooperation for a more stable East-West relationship.

The Prime Minister's trip to the Soviet Union this fall will be an important catalyst for this process.

Our relationships with Moscow are already extensive and improving across the board. They range from artistic exchanges through the scientific and environmental communities. There is active Arctic cooperation. The flow of human contacts is quickening and widening. Family reunification cases have been resolved at an unprecedented rate. A little more than two years ago I handed Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze a list of 42 cases we wanted to see resolved. Everyone of them has been resolved.

Business contacts with the Soviet Union are thriving. Canadian business leaders have been beating the path to Moscow. They report to me that the opportunities are real and that the Soviets are serious. Ten joint ventures are underway, involving Lavalin, Olympia and York, Abitibi-Price, Fracmaster, Foremost, and others, and more are in the works.

Many of you have personal experience doing business in the Soviet Union. Canadian firms are building the world's largest off-road, all terrain transporter with a Soviet partner. McDonald's of Canada will soon be serving hamburgers to Muscovites. Other Canadian companies are improving Soviet dairy herds, making tooling for the automotive industry and working in Soviet oilfields. Our geographic similarity gives us a natural opportunity to sell and buy technology and products useful in the resource and agricultural sectors.

The Government of Canada seeks new trade in both directions with the U.S.S.R. and with Eastern Europe. We will support it, and we encourage you to go for it.

As some of you will know, doing business with the East requires flexibility, patience and persistence. My Department stands ready to assist you in this process, in making contacts, obtaining data and providing follow-up.

The Prime Minister will take some senior business leaders with him to the U.S.S.R. We hope deals will be signed. But we also hope that contacts will be made and that President Gorbachev will appreciate the interest of Canadian business in his country.