

launched multilateral trade negotiations would do much to enhance trade flows between Canada and India and indeed with the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. I have, therefore, urged in my meetings with my Indian colleagues that our two countries should work together in the new trade round to ensure a result which both achieves further liberalization of world trade and strengthens the multilateral trading system which is so essential to the health of the international economy.

Our review of our economic and commercial relationship with India obviously revealed some considerable achievements. Canadian firms have particular expertise in planning, designing and executing large-scale capital projects. They have already been responsible for major hydro-electric projects in north and south India, a gas pipeline and an iron mine. Our technological capabilities and competitiveness have been responsible for major contracts in railway computerization, avionics and solar systems. We have also begun to see very positive results from the partnership which has been established between your Confederation of Engineering Industry and the Canadian Manufactureres Association and between the Canada-India Business Council and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The question of our government was therefore, how best to build on these positive trends. Our view in Canada is that, at the end of the day, it is the business and industry commitments which will be decisive in making our economic partnership work. The Government will be supportive in every way possible, that requires a coherent dialogue at the government-to-government level, close and ongoing contacts with industry representatives and the establishment of a positive environment for business exchanges. And this we are doing.

During my last visit it was agreed that annual Indo-Canadian ministerial consultations should take place and that they should include discussion of a variety of bilateral economic and trade matters. The first round of these consultations took place last week and were most positive. Amongst the matters we discussed were a number of detailed proposals made by Canadian companies for major projects and I was most encouraged by the response we received from the Indian side.

Another government-to-government step has been the renewal of the Canada-India Air Services Agreement which will permit an expansion of the present direct air links by our two national carriers. Direct air links do not only make it easier for tourist travel, they facilitate business contacts. They also help to sustain family and people-to-people ties. The thriving Indo-Canadian community in Canada is an important link between our countries. They make major contributions to our political life, our economy, scholarship and the arts, and Canada is much stronger because of them.