

only be conjectured. But one fails at one's peril to recognize the sense of destiny which fuels this evolution.

Our Government recognizes that emerging fact and we applaud it. We applauded last week in Brussels, just as we applauded two years ago on the occasion of the entry into the Community of Britain, Ireland and Denmark. And these expressions of understanding have coloured the way in which our current approach to the European Community has been received. That initiative is no less and no more than to seek ways of engaging the Community in a dynamic, co-operative enterprise.

We wish to add a new, yet parallel dimension to the expanding links we are already building with our partners among the nine member states -- a relationship that will grow as the Community itself moves from infancy through adolescence to full maturity, a relationship in which Canada's interests and its singular identity are recognized and reflected in decisions taken, a relationship in which consultation and reciprocal advice are accepted, a relationship of mutual respect, of give and take.

There is a degree of novelty to this exercise. The Community, understandably, is as yet far from certain of the shape it will assume, the jurisdiction it will occupy, or the powers it will possess in years to come. Nor is it for Canada to say. This is a European exercise. Yet one thing is certain. It is that this new Europe -- which already accounts for 20 per cent of world trade -- will be an increasingly formidable actor on the world stage -- in commerce, in science, in economic and financial activity, in technology, and more. That being the case, it would be irresponsible for a Canadian Government not to seek a distinctive relationship with it. Without question, such an exercise could be conducted along more familiar channels were we to wait a few years, as most other countries have apparently chosen to do. But that would ignore the spirit of creativity that now permeates the Community and to which we seek to contribute. Comfort and familiarity are not our criteria; benefit to Canada is.

This desire, this technique, this goal, are shared by the European Commission. Our discussions with President Ortoli, with Vice-President Soames and with other Commissioners left no doubt about this. There was a significant meeting of minds both on the conception of this new relationship and on the initial steps to set the process in motion. It is bound to be a lengthy process, but we must begin. As a result of my talks in Brussels, it was agreed that a new process would be initiated involving concrete steps to strengthen the links between Canada and the European Community.