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Commission for Europe in July 1973, enabling it to make an increasingly valuable contribution to the work of this important United Nations body. On the strictly bilateral plane, the traditionally good relations we are enjoying with the individual West European states are developing quite substantively in many fields. I have in mind the fruitful and concrete co-operation that is emerging from the cultural as well as scientific and technological agreements we have with a number of them.

Finally, I should like to refer to the exchange of visits between Canadian Parliamentarians and their colleagues from the European Parliament. The Government welcomes this development, which adds to the stimulating link, which has already existed for several years, with the 17 member nations of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Eastern Europe Relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe have continued to develop. The main challenge now is not so much to expand relations further -- although this may be possible -- but to build on the foundations that have been laid. This challenge is perhaps less exciting but no less demanding than the one we faced a few years ago, when we were trying to find new areas for co-operation. I remain convinced of the desirability of good relations, on the basis of reciprocity, with these countries. This not only serves Canada's bilateral interests but should also be seen as a contribution to *détente*.

Japan When I spoke to you in May last year, I said that we had been attempting to "politicize" a bilateral relationship with Japan that had, in the past, been too narrowly commercial. I have met twice since that time with my Japanese counterpart to discuss matters of mutual interest. Canadian officials have conducted various informal talks with their Japanese colleagues, and I am glad to be able to report that there has been an increasing trend toward consulting with the Japanese on world issues.

Japan is our second-largest trading partner. Japanese investment could play an important role in furthering Canadian development objectives and, in this context, we welcome it. Discussions with Canadian officials and their Japanese counterparts now take place in an impressive number of economic-related fields -- science and technology, atomic power, minerals and energy, to name a few. Other areas, where less-formal discussion now takes place, are being looked at to see whether it is not possible to initiate more regular and structured contact.

We shall have an opportunity of reviewing the whole range of our

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