



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

71/16

A CANADIAN LEADER LOOKS AT THE SOVIET UNION

A Statement by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau
in the House of Commons, May 28, 1971.

...The Soviet Union occupies a vast land-mass extending through 11 time-zones, some of which I am still feeling, with climates varying from the desert heat of Central Asia to the frigid temperatures of the Arctic. While in the U.S.S.R., I was taken by the Soviet Government to six cities in addition to Moscow. We travelled some 12,400 kilometres while doing so. Two of those cities, Murmansk and Norilsk, were within the Arctic Circle, the largest communities in the world that far north. They offered evidence of the advantages to be gained by Canada in the development of our North through closer co-operation and exchanges with the Soviet Union.

This visit to the U.S.S.R., which concluded just three hours ago, was the first by a Canadian Prime Minister, while in office, to that country. It was by no means, however, the first occasion on which a Minister of the Canadian Government has travelled in the Soviet Union. Our relations with that country have been developing and increasing in complexity since Canada first opened an embassy in Moscow in the early 1940s.

...Canada has long had treaty arrangements with the Soviet Government. Our first trade agreement was signed in 1956. Since that time, in every year except 1969, we have enjoyed a favourable and often substantial balance of trade in our favour. I might add that while in Moscow our trade in wheat was reviewed, including the Soviet assurance that, when the U.S.S.R. has requirements to import wheat, it will in the first instance apply to Canada as a preferred source of supply. In January of this year, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce concluded an important agreement with the U.S.S.R. on the industrial application of science and technology, an agreement that reflects the recognition in the U.S.S.R., of Canada's increasing stature as the owner of important, advanced technology and of our awareness of the important progress made by the Soviets in a number of fields.

This increasing interest in the Soviet Union has not been confined to the Government. A wide range of contacts has been established in recent years by persons who recognize the Soviet Union as a near neighbour, as a country of great influence, as a market-place and trading partner of immense potential, as the home of wide cultural attainments and as a fascinating land. I believe we have much to gain in this process of increasing awareness....