

Warm personal relations rest, I believe, on the many shared traditions and affinities between our two countries.

Heirs to the British Parliamentary tradition, we have both developed institutions to guarantee and encourage lively and free political debate. Our respect for free speech is mirrored in our guarantees for a free press. India is correctly described as the world's largest democracy: I would add only that all Canadians salute India's vibrant democracy in an age when so many countries have chosen other, less praiseworthy, political systems.

Our two countries are also developing many personal and family ties. Canadian life has been enriched by over 320,000 citizens of Indian origin. This year we anticipate we will accept over 9,000 Indian immigrants to Canada and about 25,000 visitors. Canadians, too, are travelling more widely and India is a cherished destination for Canadians of all ages. As we have become more interested in each other, we have developed many formal and informal exchanges -- cultural, academic and commercial.

Thirty-five years ago, Canada and India began our extensive cooperation in development assistance. Over the years, India has become the largest single recipient of Canadian bilateral project assistance in the world. But India is not the same country it was in those early post-independence years when the Colombo plan was launched. Nor is Canada. India has changed remarkably, and so have Canadian capabilities in many advanced industrial areas. Our development cooperation has adapted to keep pace with those changes.

We all know of the giant strides that India has taken in developing its agriculture; its industrial sector; its electronic industry and especially its telecommunications sector. These achievements have presented Indian and Canadian planners with a formidable challenge - how best to use the resources made available through the development assistance program - where is the "fit" between our economies that can make the relationship a viable one, beneficial to both partners?

Canada has been involved in India's energy sector for more than 30 years. But here, too, it has become obvious that the situation changed as India developed its own capabilities. Nevertheless, attractive financing combined with specific technological expertise can improve