

STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.



NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS
BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CANADA,
DR. MARK MACGUIGAN,
TO THE ITALO-CANADIAN
CHAMBRE OF COMMERCE,
ROME, MAY 7, 1981

"CANADA AND ITALY:
PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE"

For many reasons it is a great pleasure for me to be here with you today. The first is surely the experience of being in this great historic city which over the centuries has been the seat of events and developments which have so profoundly influenced western civilization. A second reason is the sense of kinship which so many Canadians feel with the Italian people, a kinship derived from the long association Canadians have had with so many of your citizens who came to Canada from Italy and now have taken their place as community leaders in so many fields. A few of them are here with me today -- Members of the Parliament of Canada or prominent citizens in my country. A third reason arises from the many parallel aspects of the history of both our countries which have forged strong and lasting links between us. Today, I want briefly to tell you of some of those common and complementary traits shared by Canada and Italy.

Some are a matter of historical record. Both modern Italy and Canada were born in the 1860s -- both products of the liberal political philosophy of the nineteenth century. In the longer term, of course, our history and geography are vastly different. It is sometimes said that Canada has too much geography and Europe too much history -- of which Italy, as heir to Roman civilization and the renaissance, has the most. But in many ways those differences have yielded complementary benefits. We in Canada have benefited from the wisdom of the ancient civilizations which evolved here; and our geographic vastness and natural resources have made possible a better life for so many of your former countrymen.

Over the years, both our countries have been enriched through the multiplicity of contacts made possible through migration, international commerce, tourism, and cultural relations. Those contacts have given Canadians a deep appreciation of the quantity and quality of Italy's contribution to our people and nation. That appreciation is perhaps best reflected in the welcome Canadians have accorded to so many immigrants of Italian origin, and in our eagerness to bring them into the mainstream of Canada. More recently, the spontaneous contribution of Canadians towards relief for natural disasters such as the Italian earthquake is more tangible evidence of the feelings between our countries.

We have other similarities. Although for very different geographical, historical and cultural reasons, regionalism in both our countries has been a strong factor in our political and economic development. In both our countries this factor has also instilled in our people and governments a sense of coexistence, tolerance and compromise -- characteristics which have marked them for a special role and presence in international affairs.

In that connection, too, we both share the same fundamental values regarding international behaviour. We have similar perceptions and take similar approaches to a number of important issues -- the maintenance of international peace and security, the need for a balance of power in the world, political and economic relationships between East and West, international economic relations, and world trade. In our determination to advance the North-South dialogue, our goals are similar -- to meet the United Nations' objective of .7 of one per cent of our gross national product by the end of this decade.

Both Canada and Italy are middle-sized countries -- without imperial ambitions or pretensions towards power. We are each conscious of the unique contribution which our countries can make through the international organizations of which we are members -- the United Nations (U.N.), the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Our heads of government both participate in summit meetings of the seven most industrialized countries.

In the formulation of international policies and positions, Canada is often impelled to play a role of moderator and catalyst vis-à-vis the United States. In many ways this role is comparable with that of Italy toward its partners in the European Community.

Both Canada and Italy have demonstrated that they are dedicated and loyal members of the Western community. In our relations with allies and friends, we ourselves are convinced and wish to convince others of the merits of full consultation and closer co-operation on the basis of equality, interdependence and solidarity. Both our countries strive to make certain that our voices are heard, our contribution appreciated, and our influence recognized.

Both Canada and Italy are heavily dependent on foreign trade for our economic prosperity. The growth of commercial exchanges between our two countries in recent years is encouraging, but is not the most important aspect of our economic relationship. While our resource base and our industrial development and expertise are different, they tend in some ways to complement each other and we both have a strong common interest in advancing world-wide free trade, in combating protectionism and in preventing the balkanization of the world into even more restrictive and self-seeking trading blocs. International trade has been much liberalized over the past 25 years, but now that the world economy is passing through a

difficult phase, many seek redress in protectionist measures which are frighteningly reminiscent of former times. Canada and Italy both must resist these tendencies.

In the light of these common, complementary and parallel elements in our national outlooks, interests and goals, it is natural that relations between Italy and Canada should be easy and friendly -- devoid of serious problems. But I think we should not take those relationships for granted. In the light of many affinities between us, we together should strive to make these links more effective, productive and rewarding than has been the case to the present. May I suggest a number of endeavours which we should consider exploring?

First, I think both our countries would benefit through more frequent and systematic bilateral consultation on political and economic problems besetting the world. It is true that we have many common relations through multilateral fora such as the U.N., NATO, the GATT and the Economic Summit. But through enhanced bilateral consultation we could more clearly identify and effectively promote common objectives and interests we hold in areas of vital importance to our future well-being.

Secondly, I believe that Canada and Italy should link their efforts to advance the cause of free trade. I would like to ask Italy, as a founder member and senior partner in the Economic European Community (EEC) to press its Common Market partners to resist protectionist pressures and to be more outward-looking; we in Canada with our special ties with the United States will endeavour to impress more convincingly upon that country the need to maintain open and liberal trading policies. Now, when the world is in a period of economic stress, we must all guard against a natural tendency towards protectionist temptations. Canada and Italy, both dependent on international trade, are acutely aware of the reality of interdependence in the modern world. I believe we can both make a constructive contribution by sharing our perceptions, approaches, and experiences in this regard.

In both our countries we must improve our capacities to compete in the international arena. One tangible and constructive way to do this is through enhancing our scientific and technical exchanges. In a related fashion, we should also explore ways of broadening the scope of our economic co-operation. There are many avenues for achieving this -- for example through joint ventures and mutually beneficial investments both at home and in third countries. In this respect, I believe that the fields of agriculture, energy, communications, defence production, and space merit detailed examination and consultation.

There are a number of avenues we can use to carry out this process. This Italo-Canadian Chamber of Commerce can make an important contribution in fostering closer co-operation in the private business sector. In addition, government-to-government contacts can intensify our working relationships. In that connection, my discussions yesterday and today with Foreign Minister Colombo and other members of the Italian cabinet and officials have confirmed my belief that Canada and Italy are indeed natural and attractive partners in both political and economic matters. In this regard, I am looking forward to the visit to Canada of the Minister of Industry of Italy, who will lead an economic mission to Canada. This will deal, inter alia, with industry investment projects, energy, and the other fields of economic co-operation between us.

Neither Italians nor Canadians should underestimate the importance of viable, mutually beneficial partnerships during the 1980s and beyond. We must be aware -- both in Canada and in Italy -- of the radical changes that have taken place in the world's political and economic balance during the seventies and are still process. We know that the world of the eighties is less stable and less predictable than the period following the end of the Second World War -- a period in which both our countries enjoyed a phenomenal rate of economic growth. But today's realities are quite different. The upward realignment of energy prices, the impact of new technologies on traditional cultures, and the generally more volatile nature of international relations -- all of these developments have broken the traditional bounds of economic and political power. In the self-interest of both our countries, we must look for more steady and stable relationships if we are to survive and prosper.

In Canada, our own foreign policy now takes account of this changed international economic and political environment. Over the years we have been like Italy -- among the world's most internationalist countries. We intend to continue in that tradition. But we must now search for new sources of investment, new working relationships, joint ventures and other partnerships -- all as key inputs into our economic development.

In closing, I suggest that we should not only strengthen the ties which already exist between Italy and Canada, but that we should further develop them in a way that can work to the benefit of both our countries in the difficult period ahead. I hope that my visit here will prove to have been just the beginning of a set of new initiatives toward other ways in which we can benefit both our own peoples and those of other parts of the world.