



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ENTER UNMAPPED TERRITORY

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, on the Occasion of the First Meeting of the Canada/European Communities Joint Co-operation Committee, Brussels, December 10, 1976.

I thank you, Monsieur Ortoli, for your kind words of welcome. It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this important occasion -- the inaugural meeting of our Joint Co-operation Committee. I can assure you that I share your appreciation of the approach that should inform and guide those concerned in the implementation of the agreement that we have "put in place" with the objective of bringing about increased economic co-operation between Canada and the European Communities. In particular, it is essential that those who, from today, will have the challenge of giving meaning and substance to our declared intentions should set about that task with a sense of realism and purpose.

In signing the Framework Agreement, it could be said that both Canada and the Community have entered into uncharted territory. As you have indicated, Monsieur Ortoli, the Agreement represents the first such agreement the European Communities have negotiated with an industrialized country. And Canada has never before negotiated such an agreement. We have, therefore, neither precedent nor experience as a guide.

What we do start with, however, are wide-ranging and deep-rooted links between Canada and the Europe of The Nine. These links have been and continue to be strong and vital -- those of history and ethnic origins, of shared values and traditions, of mutual security, of economic interdependence and of international co-operation. Indeed, it was this reality, these established relations, that impinged in no small way on the basic review of foreign policy that Canada undertook just a few years ago. One of the major conclusions to emerge from that review was the need to achieve a better balance or equilibrium in our external relations through the diversification of these relations, notably with respect to our external economic interests. Given our links with Europe, it was logical in the circumstances for Canada to seek a stronger and more vital economic content to our relations with Western Europe. Our consequent initiatives to develop our bilateral economic relations with the member states of the Community, particularly in the area of industrial co-operation, you are aware of, and, I am pleased to say, they are

beginning to show definite results.

It was our mutual recognition of the fact that the Community represented a new dimension to our relationship with Europe that persuaded us that there would also be mutual interest in developing that relationship in conjunction with the co-operation we envisaged with the member states. As part of this process, Canadian and Commission officials have developed the practice of holding regular informal consultations on economic issues of mutual interest. These have, appropriately, reflected the major role that both Canada and the Community play in international trade and economic relations, as well as our importance to one another.

We can now add to the Canada-Community relationship in a significant way under our new agreement by using this imaginative framework to bring about a dynamic and mutually -- beneficial expansion of our commercial and economic connections. Co-operation with the Community collectively will, of course, be pursued by Canada with full appreciation of the interests and competences of the individual member states. In our view, these relations should develop both bilaterally and with the Community as a whole so that they reinforce and complement one another.

This is one of the reasons why we consider it important that our joint efforts under the agreement should be launched with all possible speed. With the signature and ratification of the agreement, we completed Phase One, which can be considered the preliminary phase of the operation. Inasmuch as today's meeting of the Joint Co-operation Committee will be essentially organizational, we should perhaps regard it as the transitional stage leading to Phase Two. In our view, this next phase should begin as early as possible in the new year, so that the Joint Committee can get down to its main purpose, without delay, of bringing about co-operation in practical and effective ways. I think we are in full agreement that to achieve this objective the Committee will need to establish a substructure and *modus operandi* that will enable it quickly to identify priority areas or sectors for co-operation. At the same time, the organizational framework must be conducive to bringing together appropriate elements of our respective business communities in a close working relation. In the end, it is their response to the work that will be undertaken by the Joint Committee that will be of utmost importance to achieving results. I should underline here that our respective authorities will not be seeking to employ the agreement as a means of developing an interventionist approach. In our sort of economic systems that would not be appropriate, and that is not our intention. Instead, in selected areas, we shall be trying to promote economic and commercial co-operation and to foster an environment conducive

to industrial co-operation in particular. In short, while government will take as active a role as it can, given our economic system, it is clear that much will depend on the private sector. In particular, it will depend on the readiness of the private sector to respond to what I would call "catalytic action" on the part of government. That is, business must be ready to seize the opportunities that emerge from a process in which they will, of course, have been closely involved.

On the Canadian side, we are also very much aware that effective implementation of the agreement will often require the involvement and co-operation of our provincial governments. This is something we shall want to ensure and we shall, of course, make appropriate arrangements to associate our provincial authorities in the process of implementation. Our provinces, I am pleased to say, have expressed keen interest in and support for Federal Government initiatives in Europe. This applies particularly to what is envisaged under the Canada-Community agreement.

The proposed work program for the Joint Committee that officials will consider later seems to provide a well-blended menu. I am aware that some useful preliminary work has already begun in areas such as non-ferrous metals and forest products, and that there have been exchanges of missions between us in these sectors. These are of obvious interest to both sides, as, indeed, are other proposed items such as co-operation involving the telecommunications, construction and nuclear-uranium industries. As a Canadian from a region where the fisheries industry is a vital part of the economy, I am naturally happy, as well as intrigued, that the possibility of fisheries co-operation will also be explored, and I look forward to learning of what opportunities may exist for commercial and economic co-operation in this field.

In setting in motion whatever work program is agreed upon today, it is my hope that the Committee will apply the tests of pragmatism and realism to its deliberations. Neither side has suggested at any time that the agreement would be some kind of panacea, that it could transform our economic relation overnight, but we must guard against over-optimism without lessening our determination to succeed. I share your view, therefore, that, in the first year or so, the efforts of the Committee should be directed primarily towards a limited number of areas. This will by no means reduce the effort required of those involved, and that should not be underestimated. But, if it is well directed, the work of the first two years will put in place the most important building-block and permit us to move pragmatically from what may well be modest beginnings to more ambitious forms of co-operation. If we proceed in this way, I am confident that there will

be success down the road.

In closing, may I express to you, Monsieur Ortoli, and to your good colleague Sir Christopher Soames, our appreciation for the personal support you have always given to our joint efforts to develop a closer and more vigorous economic relationship between Canada and the Community. You may be sure that we have been highly conscious of the co-operation and the constructive spirit you have brought to our relations. Thank you.

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