

PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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Following is the text of a joint communique issued simultaneously in Ottawa by the Department of External Affairs and in Washington by the United States Department of State:

The first meeting of the Joint United States-Canadian Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs was held in Washington on the 16th of March. The United States was represented by:

Hon. John Foster Dulles,
Secretary of State

Hon. George M. Humphrey,
Secretary of the Treasury

Hon. Ezra Taft Benson,
Secretary of Agriculture

Hon. Sinclair Weeks,
Secretary of Commerce

Canada was represented by:

Rt. Hon. C.D. Howe, M.P.,
Minister of Trade and Commerce,
and Defence Production

Rt. Hon. James Garfield Gardiner, M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture

Hon. Douglas Charles Abbott, M.P.,
Minister of Finance

Hon. L.B. Pearson, M.P.,
Secretary of State for
External Affairs

In addition to the members of the Joint Committee, Governor Adams, the Assistant to the President, the Honourable Douglas Stuart, United States Ambassador to Canada, and Dr. Gabriel Hague, Economic Assistant to the President, participated in the discussions.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for United States and Canadian Ministers to examine the trade and economic problems that are common to both countries.

The Ministers noted that the flow of trade between Canada and the United States is greater than that between any other two countries. They discussed various aspects of present trade relations and agreed on the desirability of avoiding any action which would interfere with this trade from which the two countries derive such great benefits.

Since the common economic problems of Canada and the United States can be solved with greatest success in a world where the volume of trade is steady and increasing and where exchange arrangements are of a kind to facilitate such growth, consideration was given throughout the discussions to the need for action towards freer trade and payments on a broad front. It was agreed that few things would contribute more to the well-being and stability of the free nations of the world than a forward move in this direction. The need for such progress seemed all the greater at a time when many western countries are faced with the necessity of supporting effective defense programs over a long period.

The United States and Canadian Ministers found encouragement in many of the economic developments that have taken place over the past year. They noted that the gold and dollar reserves of other countries generally have been rising; that there has been a marked improvement in the internal economic stability of many countries; and that these favourable developments have made possible some relaxation of import restrictions. Nevertheless, it was agreed that the recovery to economic health has not progressed equally for all countries. What is needed, it was concluded, is the creation of a more flexible system of trade and payments throughout the world which would offer greater resilience to changing circumstances and which would contribute dynamically towards rising standards of living. It was agreed that much of the necessary preparation for such an advance has already been accomplished by the work of the Commission on Foreign Economic Policy in the United States, by the proposals of the Commonwealth Economic Conference, and by discussions within the organization for European Economic Cooperation.

In the meantime, it was agreed that it is essential that pressing, but possibly temporary, economic problems should not be solved by expedients which might make more difficult the advance on a broad front that was held to be necessary. One immediate problem which received close consideration was that raised by the accumulation of large agricultural surpluses. Special incentives and favorable weather conditions have operated in varying degrees to enlarge these surpluses. The Ministers of both countries recognized that if surpluses were to be disposed of without regard to the impact on normal trade, great damage might be done not only to the commerce of Canada and the United States but also to the world economy. The Ministers reaffirmed that it is the continuing policy of their respective governments, in disposing of agricultural surpluses abroad, to consult with interested countries and not to

interfere with normal commercial marketings. They stated that it is their settled intention that any extraordinary measures that might be adopted to reduce surpluses should result in greater consumption and should augment, and not displace, normal quantities of agricultural products entering into world trade.

In advancing toward a freer system of world trade and payments, it was agreed that existing international organizations would continue to play an important role. The valuable work already done by the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank, and the Contracting Parties of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, was recognized. Ministers noted with satisfaction the arrangements which have recently been made within the Fund to enable its resources to be used more effectively. Acknowledgment was also made of the useful service that has been performed by GATT in developing a code of commercial conduct and in providing a forum where multilateral tariff agreements could be negotiated and where the problems of commercial policy could be discussed.

It was appreciated that it is for countries whose currencies are now inconvertible to decide when and under what circumstances they might wish to make them convertible. It was also realized that enlightened economic policies on the part of the United States and Canada will materially contribute to establishing and maintaining broader freedom of trade and payments throughout the world. Because of the importance of that objective, the United States and Canadian Ministers warmly welcomed the evidence of a desire in many countries to take decisive steps toward the restoration of a broad area of convertibility, and expressed a willingness to do their part to help in making such a movement successful.

The discussions at this meeting of the Joint Committee were marked by the friendliness and candour which are characteristic of relations between the two countries. At the invitation of the Canadian Ministers the second meeting of the Joint Committee will be held in Ottawa.