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CANADA/EC MEETINGS, OCTOBER 16-18, 1979

Senior officials of the Canadian Government and of the Commission of the European Communities held high-level consultations as well as meetings of the two Sub-Committees of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) in Ottawa on October 16 and 17. The high-level Canada/EC meetings have taken place since 1972, while the JCC and its Sub-Committees (Industrial Cooperation Sub-Committee and the General and Preparatory Sub-Committee) were created under the Canada/EC Framework Agreement signed on July 6, 1976. Representatives of the Canadian provinces were present at the sub-committee meetings.

The EC delegation was led by Manfred Caspari, Deputy Director-General for External Relations, and the Canadian delegation by J.R. McKinney, Special Economic Adviser, Department of External Affairs. The Industrial Sub-Committee was chaired on the Canadian side by A.M. Guérin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Industry, Trade and Commerce.

A comprehensive exchange of views took place on economic prospects for the coming year including likely trends in world trade and the prospects for growth in Canada and Europe. The extent to which the patterns of economic growth and world trade would be influenced by developments in the energy field was stressed by both sides.

The discussions re-affirmed the importance of prompt implementation of the agreements reached in the recent Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN). Canadian and EC officials outlined the implementation procedures which they proposed to follow.

With regard to the vital question of energy supply the two delegations took note of developments flowing from the Tokyo Summit in June this year, the Paris meeting of energy Ministers in September and the ongoing work of the International Energy Agency. Against this background they outlined their respective energy problems and policies.

It was agreed that the attainment of satisfactory levels of economic growth with less growth in energy demand was a priority for both sides. A more rational use of energy demanded a wider application of known energy conservation methods throughout the economy, a more extensive propagation of the results of research into new technology, and the rapid commercialization of alternative energy sources. Scope for Canada/EC cooperation in these fields was examined.

Canadian officials reviewed developments in the coal, oil, gas and uranium industries and opportunities in these resource sectors. The prospects for future cooperation especially in such fields as thermal coal and Arctic gas were examined and note was taken of the importance of this cooperation for future development of Canadian energy resources and supply.

Among sources of energy alternative to oil the European side spoke not only of the expanded role envisaged for coal and gas, but also of the work being done to encourage recourse to solar and geothermal energy. They also emphasized the importance of nuclear energy in reducing their dependence on oil.

Both Canada and the EC have contributed positively to the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation ((INFCE). When the work of INFCE has been completed early next year, they anticipate that it will facilitate intensification of existing cooperation between them, in accordance with their respective policies in this sector. This cooperation should embrace both the question of long term uranium supply for peaceful uses and the scope for increased exchanges of nuclear technology and equipment.

In addition the two sides noted with satisfaction the prospects for cooperation in the field of research on nuclear waste management.

The two delegations also reviewed a range of particular issues in their economic and trade relations. These included specific items in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

Separate meetings were to be held on October 18 with the participation of representatives from the provinces concerned to review the conditions under which alcoholic beverages exported from Europe to Canada are marketed and sold.

The Industrial Sub-Committee received reports on the progress in industrial cooperation between Canada and the EC. In this context, discussions were well advanced on a joint research project

on greater energy efficiency in blast furnaces used in the production of steel. The project, announced in January of this year, involved twenty-six blast furnaces in Europe and Canada. Advances were also made in the possible use of the Canadian Energy Bus concept in Europe. The Energy Bus is designed and equipped to test the energy efficiency of particular industrial plants and then suggest methods of saving on energy consumption. The Canadian government indicated it would be willing to train technical staff in the use of this Canadian innovation which would enable interested Member States to install their own version of the Energy Bus. This may result in other such programmes in related fields.

Information was exchanged on the organization in Europe and in Canada of "Seminars on Technology" on new developments in the field of non-ferrous metals and industrial processes and on the implementation of a comprehensive programme established in December 1978 for cooperation in the sector of asbestos.

Both delegations emphasized the importance of the European mission to Canada on telecommunication data processing which will take place in November 1979. A significant number of European companies have already indicated their participation and many others have shown considerable interest in this endeavour to link up efforts leading to the continuing development of this new industry involving investment, technology-sharing and marketing. A similar Canadian mission visited Europe in 1978.

The Industrial Cooperation Sub-Committee welcomed the growing interest in trade and industrial cooperation with Canada shown by European industrialists. The Sub-Committee noted with satisfaction the successful visit of the BDI (Federation of German Industries) mission to Canada and expressed the hope that the forthcoming visits by Dutch, Italian, and Belgian industrialists would be equally successful.

At the General and Preparatory Sub-Committee it was noted that preparations were in hand for holding the third meeting of the Canada/EC Joint Cooperation Committee at ministerial level in Brussels on December 17.