

Statement

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Address

by the Honourable John Crosbie,

Minister of Transport

Maurya Sheraton, New Delhi

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Secretary of State  
for  
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État  
aux  
Affaires extérieures

Canada

It is a pleasure to be here with you today. My wife and I have looked forward with great anticipation to this trip, our fifth visit to India. It has become wonderfully clear to me over the years why India has, for centuries, fired the imagination of people around the world.

It is a special pleasure to have this opportunity to address such a distinguished group of businessmen, government officials, and journalists. I speak to you today not only as Canada's Transport Minister, but also as a representative of a government which has placed very high priority on its relations with India. Prime Minister Mulroney and Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, have, in numerous public statements and private discussions, emphasized the Canadian government's commitment to expand and intensify its relations with India. We have been most satisfied that the Indian government shares this commitment and that our mutual efforts have already begun to produce significant results.

India is both a major Asian power and a principal leader of the non-aligned movement. Its role in international diplomacy has grown and its importance in international affairs is commensurate with its deep experiences and recognized expertise. The challenges it faces are shared by many of the countries of the world, and India's innovative responses are watched closely by the global community. Canada has long been an admirer of India's achievements and we continue to value greatly Indian views on a wide range of international issues. India matters to Canada.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Vancouver last October provided an excellent example of how our two countries joined forces to tackle a particularly important and contentious international issue -- apartheid in South Africa. We are often in agreement on the major issues of the day: but even where we disagree, our discussions are marked by respect and understanding for the basic considerations which underlie our respective policies.

A catalogue of interests can explain why we have to talk to each other, but does not explain why we enjoy doing so. There is a special warmth to the Canada/India relationship, a deep friendship which goes back over many years. Prime Minister Nehru and Canada's Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent early on established a relationship based on deep admiration for each other. Their friendship established a pattern for successive leaders in both countries; it is evident today that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Prime Minister Gandhi have also established a highly personal rapport.

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

both the efficiency and the timely completion of power projects, and enhance the benefits to the Indian economy as a whole. We have recently completed the Idukki Hydro-electric project in Kerala and are building a major hydro project in Himachal Pradesh. Energy is still a major sector of cooperation between our countries and I believe collaboration in this field will continue to our mutual benefit.

The concept of full partnership will increasingly dominate the Indo-Canadian commercial relationship. We already have a solid foundation. We can both be proud of the close relationships that have developed in the past and continue to flourish today. Bata, Howe International, India Aluminum, Cominco-Binani Zinc, Solachrome, and KSB Pumps are but a few of the outstanding commercial marriages that are leading to heightened two-way exchanges between our countries.

There will be, there must be, more. And nowhere is this truer than in the transportation sector. I referred earlier to the process of Canadian nation-building. I am proud to say, as Transport Minister, that transportation policy has been an absolutely essential building block of the Canadian nation. In the 19th century we built a 4000-mile railway across a largely empty continent. It opened up vast territories to settlement and development. That "ribbon of steel" tied together a scattered people -- physically and psychologically -- into a great nation. In the air, along our coasts and inland waterways, and in our cities we have created technologies and techniques which have served the objectives of Canadian development. Canadians are world leaders in transportation because we have had to be. And we are ready and eager to join our expertise with Indian capabilities and requirements.

That is the message I bring to India, and I am pleased that I have been accompanied here by representatives of some of the most distinguished companies in the Canadian transportation sector. Allow me to introduce them to you.

Bombardier, is well known to those of you involved in railway operations in India. The Bombardier ALCO engine was first introduced in India some 27 years ago and has long since been indigenized. I understand that this engine successfully moves 65% of your freight and 35% of your passenger traffic. We are pleased with our joint efforts over the past quarter century to implement this important project, and are optimistic that

the potential exists for Bombardier to work with you as full partners to meet your next generation engine requirements.

Bombardier's mass transit division is also with us today. Bombardier offers a full range of urban transport equipment through its worldwide net of manufacturing licences and joint venture partners.

Leading edge technology is a critical factor in the successful formation of a true partnership. I am pleased to introduce today the Urban Transportation Development Corporation or UTDC, which leads the world in advanced light rapid transit system technology. Together with an Indian partner, this unique technology and UTDC's wide experience with all forms of urban transit can be adapted to meet India's specialized requirements.

These Canadian firms are fully aware that a full partnership enabling maximum indigenization should be the key factor in India's urban transportation planning. I have reminded Minister Scindia of Canada's invitation to host a team of Indian officers to examine first hand how Canada plans, builds and manages our urban transportation systems and equipment. Our systems function perfectly in snow and cold weather as well as heat and rain, so the visit can take place at any time of the year.

CANAC, who is with us today, is also well known in your rail sector, largely due to its work in the development of your traffic management system. Throughout my visit, people have remarked not only on CANAC's state-of-the-art technology but also its efficiency in addressing a full range of problems related to the railway industry. They are now hopeful of applying their extensive skills in fibre optic railway communications to the needs of Indian Rail.

It may surprise you, however, to learn that Canada has the world's fifth largest aerospace industry and the second largest fleet of commercial helicopters in the world. In meeting our air transport needs, Canada has developed unique technologies for short-take-off and landing aircraft and amphibian turbo-props. The de Havilland Aircraft Company produces a number of commuter aircraft and is well known in India. De Havilland's Dash 8, a state-of-the-art, wide-bodied commuter aircraft, is ideally suited to India's requirements. Canada believes that intensified cooperation between de Havilland and Vayudoot will be of benefit to both Canada and India. I had an excellent discussion on this subject with Minister Tytler this

morning, and we agreed there should be more extensive exchanges between Canada and India in the field of commuter aircraft.

The Canadian firm, CAE, specializing in a aircraft simulators, has also accompanied me to India. CAE is well-established in India where it has sold a Boeing 747 simulator to Air India. CAE has supplied about one-third of the world's simulator requirements and recently won the very significant airbus contract for Lufthansa against all international competition. I have learned this week that CAE's reputation for having the best technology at the best price is widespread in India. With this type of recognition, I am confident we can look forward to CAE continuing to play an important role in India's future requirements.

Canada and India both have two great sea coasts and several mighty river systems. Movement of bulk commodities is the lifeline of the St. Lawrence Transportation system and Canada has developed unique technology in the form of self-unloading ships and modern ports facilities to maximize the efficiency of this 1500 mile inland waterway.

Canada Steamship Lines, a major developer and user of self-unloading vessels, believes it can significantly enhance the efficiency of commodity movements, particularly iron and coal, in India's coastal areas; the CSL technology allows tonnage normally handled in one working day to be handled in one hour. Interest shown by India has been extensive, which no doubt reflects the technology's direct application to the Indian situation.

It strikes me that an Indo-Canadian partnership in coastal shipping could be highly successful. I propose that we develop together an improved coastal system which could be transferred to third countries. Our horizon should be the entire world, and a solid partnership is an essential first step to pursuing the full spectrum of international opportunities.

Howe International has a most successful record of completing some of India's biggest bulk handling port operations. The Howe Indo-Canadian partnership was formed more than 20 years ago and is a clear, positive demonstration of what Canada and India can achieve together in the commercial shipping arena.

DGB Consultants, a member of the SNC Group, has made presentations on their vessel traffic management system which is currently being installed in Hong Kong,

and is being very well received in India. The SNC Group has a number of partnerships in India and is looking forward to expanding their Indian family of collaborations to include the important port sector.

We have made a good start, but there is much more to be done. Forging successful partnerships will require skill, perseverance and sensitivity. I am here to tell you the Canadian Government is firmly committed -- philosophically as well as financially -- to seeing this process move forward. It serves your interests as well as ours and that, surely, is the kind of bond which joins countries together and makes this a better world. I wish you all the greatest success in opening a new and exciting chapter in the Canada-India relationship.