

Saudi Arabian commerce minister visits Canada

Saudi Arabian Minister of Commerce Sulaiman Al Solaim visited Canada, August 15-21, at the invitation of Minister of International Trade Ed Lumley.

The two ministers' talks centred on increasing trade, improving technical and economic co-operation, the prospects for a wheat sale, and Saudi Arabia's participation at Vancouver's Expo 86 transportation exposition.

During his stay in Canada, Dr. Solaim also travelled to Montreal, Toronto and Edmonton for meetings with provincial government and business representatives. Quebec, Ontario and Alberta are especially active in promoting trade with Saudi Arabia and, like the federal government, intend to make greater use of fairs and missions to advance this goal.

Focus on trade

Since the opening of the Canadian embassy in Jeddah in 1974 and the establishment of a joint economic commission in 1976, trade and economic co-operation has been the focus of the Canada-Saudi Arabia relationship. In November 1980, during a visit to Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau expressed his desire for intensified bilateral relations and economic co-operation. In his trip to Saudi Arabia in April 1981, Mr. Lumley spoke of new Canadian initiatives for transfer of technology.

At a dinner in Ottawa in honour of Saudi Minister of Commerce Solaim,

Mr. Lumley said that the Canadian marketing strategy for Saudi Arabia indicated "a close match of Canadian capabilities with Saudi Arabian requirements for vocational education, electrical power, petroleum and mineral resources and telecommunications and transportation development projects".

For his part Minister Solaim stressed that the two countries should promote co-operation in petrochemicals because in a few years Saudi Arabia and Canada would possess two of the world's most efficient petrochemical industries. He identified technology and marketing as two areas where Canada has much to offer Saudi Arabia.

Minister Lumley also said that the strategy called for increased trade missions and greater Canadian participation in Saudi Arabian trade fairs. Mr. Lumley pointed out that last year six new joint ventures had begun providing technology and training. The Canadian minister also noted that government-to-government co-operation had grown substantially through agreements for technical assistance for the possible construction of a national observatory, for the establishment of a radio spectrum management system and for training of Saudi Arabian air traffic controllers.

Mr. Lumley said that the two countries were examining proposals to develop technical assistance in vocational education, in enhanced wheat and beef produc-

tion and for the establishment of remote sensing facilities.

In 1981, Canadian merchandise exports, principally autos and trucks, lumber, cable, aircraft and telecommunications equipment, rose 46 per cent to \$455 million complemented by a further \$270 million in consulting services exports. This trade made Saudi Arabia Canada's sixth largest market for manufactured goods. Canada counts on Saudi Arabia for some 30 per cent of oil imports.

Change expected in Canada's relations with South America

A parliamentary subcommittee is preparing a report which is expected to urge a renewed emphasis on Canada's relations with the countries of the Caribbean and Latin America.

One of the most important issues that the committee will address is the possibility that Canada may join the Organization of American States as a full member. The committee is expected to recommend that a higher portion of Canadian foreign aid be directed to Latin America and that Canada play a more active role in the region than in the past.

Members of the committee, who recently visited South America, are members of Parliament Maurice Dupras, chairman; David Collenette, vice-chairman; Sinclair Stevens; John Crosbie; Pauline Jewett; Ron Irwin; Jim Schroder; Jack Murta; Flora MacDonald; Stanley Hudecki; Walter McLean; and Robert Ogle, who had served in the region as a Roman Catholic priest.

The members of the committee have spent the last year and a half studying Canadian relations with the region. During August and September this year an extensive tour was made of South America with some of the members visiting the east side of the continent and the others visiting the west.

The issues which will be dealt with in the report run from Canada's trade and economic ties with countries as developed as Brazil and as poor as Guyana to the relationship between Canadian development assistance and human rights.

The final report of the committee is expected to be prepared for consideration by the House of Commons standing committee on external affairs and national defence before Parliament resumes sitting on October 29.



Minister of International Trade Ed Lumley holds a dinner in honour of the Saudi commerce minister. Left to right: Sulaiman Al Solaim; Ed Lumley; Ahmed Mohammed Beyari, chargé d'affaires at the Saudi Arabian embassy in Ottawa; and Michael Pitfield, clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the Cabinet.

Andre Sima