

I am pleased to join with my distinguished parliamentary colleagues in greeting you tonight at this Second Parliamentary Dinner of the Canada/Israel Committee which celebrates the 26th Anniversary of the State of Israel. If our attitude towards Israel were the issue before this Parliament there would be no reason to be speculating about an early election.

Your committee has set itself two goals:

- the promotion of friendship and understanding between Israel and Canada;
- and the achievement of a just and lasting peace between Israel and her Arab neighbours.

These are goals that are also being pursued by the Canadian Government.

As to the first, relations between Canada and Israel have continued to grow and prosper -- due in no small measure to the energy, spirit and resources of this committee.

Trade between our two countries amounted last year to some \$58 million, a gratifying increase of \$18 million over the figure for 1972.

More important, however, in promoting closer friendship and greater understanding between our two countries, is the increasing frequency of contact between Israelis and Canadians. While the exact figures have not yet been totalled for the number of Canadians who visited Israel in 1973, I do know that some 12,000 Israelis visited Canada that year including a number of Cabinet Ministers and other prominent Israelis. As many of you may already know, Israel's Foreign Minister Eban may be paying a short informal visit to Ottawa next month. A team of Israeli energy experts is expected in Canada in the next few days, to gain a first-hand acquaintance with the CANDU reactor system.

There has, I know, been mention in the press both here and in Israel about a professed Canadian Government disinclination to involve itself in the construction of a pilot nuclear power plant in Israel. To set the record straight, I should like to stress that Canadian Government policy allows the export of nuclear power plants anywhere in the world, provided that adequate international safeguards are applied to assure the use of these facilities exclusively for peaceful purposes. Beyond this indispensable condition, which Israel should have no difficulty whatever in meeting, any reactor sale must be treated on the basis of normal commercial considerations such as the ability of Canadian industry to satisfy domestic as well as export demand.

Under the 1972 Export Development Corporation agreement which provided Israel with loans of up to \$100 million, some \$50 million has already been committed for projects involving thermal electric power stations and Ben-Gurion commercial airport. The financing of other worth-while development projects is under discussion and I have no doubt that by the end of this year other agreements will have been reached which will see the \$100 million fully committed.