

It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome you to Canada. Maureen and I will always remember the wonderfully warm welcome we received last year in your vast and varied country. The impressions live on in memory -- Siberian expanses, modern cities, the mosaic of peoples and cultures.

This is your first visit to Canada, we hope only the first of many. We would like to show you more of our land and people. General Secretary Gorbachev during his visit across Canada in 1983 was struck again and again by the similarities in our landscapes and customs. Today, at Meach Lake, you must have been reminded of scenes of lakes and forests in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Minister, Canada is part of the New World but our roots strike deep into the Old. We look out onto the same three oceans as you, but the wellspring of our history and culture is in Europe. While our two founding peoples from Europe were English and French, one in seven Canadians has East European origins. Within our own frontiers we have forged a distinctive and united Canadian people. But history has also made us outward-looking and committed us to internationalism in world affairs.

Your visit, Mr. Minister, is testimony to the renewal of dialogue between our two countries over the past two years. In that time Prime Minister Mulroney and General Secretary Gorbachev have met and exchanged views. Six other Canadian Ministers have visited the Soviet Union, including myself. As a result we have expanded cooperation under the Arctic and Sports Exchange Agreements. We have decided to resume activity under the General Exchanges Agreement. During your visit we will renew the Economic Cooperation Agreement.

Next year we look forward to renewing our Arctic Exchanges Agreement. The Arctic is our common heritage and our common vision. We should seek to ensure it becomes a new focus of cooperation between us.

From our talks, you will appreciate that in our bilateral relations Canada is deeply concerned about two issues in particular. One is grain. Canada has long been a competitive and reliable supplier of grain to the Soviet Union. Agricultural trade has been a corner stone of our relationship. We have urged that the Grains Agreement be signed at an early date. The other is family reunification. I am concerned at the slow resolution of humanitarian questions of interest to Canada. Both these