

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, announced today in Vancouver that it has been agreed to raise the level of Canadian representation in the Philippines. The Canadian Consulate-General in the Philippines has been elevated to Embassy status.

Mr. F. B. Clark, the Consul General in Manila, has been designated Chargé d'Affaires, pending the appointment of an ambassador.

This step is intended to reflect better Canada's relations with the Philippines which have grown considerably, particularly in the commercial sphere, since the establishment of the Consulate-General in 1950. The Philippines is currently Canada's fourth largest export market in the region, after Japan, Australia and China. It has also become a source of substantial immigration to Canada which has now reached over 3,000 persons annually.

The decision to raise the level of Canadian representation in the Philippines follows closely the Government's announced intention in "Foreign Policy for Canadians", the 1970 foreign policy review, to expand Canada's presence in the Pacific in view of the expectation of rapidly increasing commercial and other relations with Pacific countries over the next few years. The step was specifically recommended in the March 1972 report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on Canadian Relations with the countries of the Pacific Region.

The Philippines opened an Embassy in Ottawa in March 1971.

Mr. Sharp arrived in Vancouver today en route to Peking where he is undertaking an official visit and participating in the opening of the first Canadian trade fair in Peking.