

How have our relations with Israel developed over the past seven years since I was last in this portfolio? I see that the basic friendliness between us has remained unchanged and that the fundamental commitment by Canada and Canadians has stood the test of time. There is continuing contact and dialogue at all levels.

There are, of course, differences between us, including some very important ones over various Israeli actions relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict as both Foreign Minister Shamir and I made clear to each other during our meeting at the United Nations last fall. At that time, we discussed our opposing views relating to the conflict - the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the occupation of West Beirut, the Reagan initiative and the Fez Summit. We also dealt with the stepped-up Israeli settlement campaign and I expressed our view that it was contrary to international law and extremely unhelpful to the peace process. Such differences do not undermine our support for Israel's very existence, as some have suggested, nor do I think they undermine the basic rapport between us.

There has always been an active interchange between our people. The number has doubled since 1977 and has reached some 40,000 to 50,000 visitors annually in each direction. Many of these are drawn primarily by family ties but a great number are involved in business and professional exchanges. It is good to see that a growing number of parliamentarians is visiting back and forth. In our Parliament, a Canada-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group has been created and a corresponding Israel-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group has been established in the Israeli Knesset.

On the official level, we have broadened our already extensive relations. There is now a framework of agreements and understandings that were not yet in place when I visited Israel. These cover trade, agriculture, industrial research, health, cultural relations and film-making. We even developed a tripartite aid project together. When I met with the late Yigal Allon who was Foreign Minister at the time of my visit, we spoke of establishing a Joint Committee on trade which I favoured. We now have two such bodies - a Joint Economic Committee and a Joint Agricultural Committee. Both met last year, one in Israel and the other here.

I am pleased to announce to-day on behalf of my colleague, the Honourable Edward Lumley, Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, that funds have been approved to help in setting up, together with Israel, an institute to promote cooperative industrial research and development in Canada and Israel. This initiative was greatly assisted by the good work of the