

Canada-Israel foreign ministers discuss common concerns

Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yitzhak Shamir of Israel made his first visit to Canada, March 13 to 18, at the invitation of Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark.

In his official visit to Ottawa, March 13-14 Mr. Shamir met with Mr. Clark, Governor General Jeanne Sauvé, Liberal Leader John Turner and New Democratic Party Leader Ed Broadbent. He met with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney on March 15, after Mr. Mulroney returned from Moscow where he attended Konstantin Chernenko's funeral.

In Canada Mr. Shamir also attended a number of private meetings and public rallies in Montreal and Toronto including a talk with new Ontario Premier Frank Miller, before returning to Israel.

Mr. Shamir, who will become prime minister of Israel next year under an agreement between his Likud bloc and the Labour Party, said the trip will help to enhance the development of a close relationship between Canada and Israel.

In a speech to the Canada-Israel Committee, Mr. Clark touched on a number of issues of concern to both countries, many of which were discussed by the two ministers.

Human rights

Mr. Clark said that during the fortieth anniversary of the defeat of Nazism in Europe, Canada "remembers respectfully the millions of Jews who died in the holocaust". He

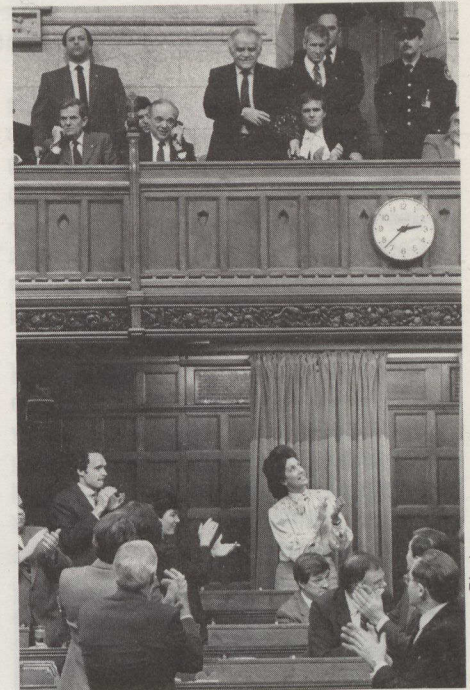
indicated that "in keeping with Canada's longstanding efforts to protect the civil rights of Canadians and our practice to speak out forcefully on human rights issues internationally", a commission of inquiry on war criminals, headed by Quebec Superior Court Justice Jules Dechenes, was recently set up by the government.

The two ministers exchanged views on the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union and agreed on the gravity of the situation and the need to use every available avenue to urge the Soviet Union to permit the emigration of Jews who wish to leave the country. In that context, Mr. Clark referred to the Experts Meeting on Human Rights, as part of the continuing process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE) in Europe, to be held in Ottawa starting on May 7. This will be the first CSCE meeting exclusively devoted to human rights, and the first held in North America.

Middle East concerns

With respect to the situation in the Middle East the ministers said they achieved a good understanding of each other's views.

Mr. Clark said Canadians welcome Israel's announced intentions to withdraw completely its forces from Lebanon. He stressed that the Canadian government will continue to contribute in any way possible to the search for a lasting peaceful settlement "based on the legitimate rights of both sides:



The foreign minister from Israel (centre top) receives a standing ovation in the Speakers Gallery of the House of Commons.

Israel's to secure and recognized boundaries and the Palestinians right to a homeland within a clearly defined territory, the West Bank and Gaza Strip".

Bilateral agreements

Mr. Clark said the Canadian government "will work to strengthen the reciprocal relationship between Canada and Israel". To this end Minister for Communications Marcel Masse signed a video and film co-production agreement with Israel, on March 18 to assist the film industries of both countries. In addition negotiations will begin this month on the request by El Al to extend its services in Canada to Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

Increased trade

"We are also working hard at enhancing trade between Canada and Israel," said Mr. Clark. He added that the government has established a particular program for Israel, called Israel Technomart '85, under the Export '85 umbrella.

"It is planned, under this program to increase contact between our respective private sectors, that a Canadian trade mission will travel to Israel in June and later in the year that an Israeli delegation will come to Canada," said Mr. Clark.

In response to an invitation by Mr. Shamir, the minister for external affairs will visit Israel in the context of a trip he will make to the Middle East this fall to obtain first-hand impressions of the region.



Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark (left) meets with Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir during his visit to Canada in March.

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