

During the recent election campaign my party stated that it would be prepared to move the Canadian Embassy from Tel Aviv to the western part of Jerusalem. That statement stands and, as both Mr. Clark and I have had occasion to say in the past few days, there is no intention to go back on it.

The statement has, nevertheless, prompted a good deal of comment and questions and continues to do so. I believe it would be useful, therefore, if I were to put it in its proper perspective.

Let me say again that we are not working to any deadlines. There are a number of high priority issues on which the Government will want to concentrate in the next few weeks and months. These include, taking the area of foreign policy alone, Canada's participation in the very important economic summit to be held in Tokyo later this month and a little further down the road in the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Lusaka. More importantly, however, the timing of what we contemplate will be determined by recommendations we have asked officials to make on what other policies will be necessary to bring our goal within reach of achievement.

In the course of our analysis it is clear that a number of considerations will need to be taken into account. As the Prime Minister has already indicated, one such consideration will be the views expressed to us by friendly countries, including those of the Arab world. Another will be any possible impact on Canada's role as a peacekeeper to which my party has always attached the very greatest importance.

Above all, we shall be influenced in the timing and manner of our move by our regard for the peace process that was begun at Camp David and to which we remain fully committed. We have made it clear that we would not wish any move we make in this matter to be construed as taking sides in the on-going negotiations or as prejudging the broader terms of a comprehensive peace settlement between all countries in the Middle East. Our goal, as is implicit in Mr. Clark's original statement of April 25, is not simply to settle the question of Jerusalem as far as Canada is concerned but to contribute, if we can, to a broader resolution of this most sensitive of the issues outstanding between Israel and the Arab countries.

Our intention, then, is to explore the best circumstances in which to bring our stated plans into effect. This is going to involve analysis and consultation. We do not have it in mind to act either precipitately or without deliberation. When we have arrived at our conclusions, the Government will indicate to the Canadian public and to Parliament how it will move ahead on the undertaking that has been made.