



Prime Minister Indira Gandhi greets Dave Mawson. Looking on are Deborah Nilsen (centre) and Margaret Tanaszi (right).

eyed Jamie Cameron of Trail, B.C. Like several of the girls, she favours contact lenses over specs, not so much from vanity: they make good conversation pieces when they fall in the dessert. Then there was Lynn Naranjit, perfectly turned out in sari and accessories. She was escorted by husband Darryl, a West Indies Indian recurring to his cultural origins. Cheryl Farley, a Calcutta girl now settled in Vancouver, was also on a sentimental journey with the Shastri group.

Which brings us to the engine-room of this dreamboat, Dave Mawson and Jeff Kushner. They could reduce the mediocre lecturer to a non sequitur but preferred to save their more abrasive comments for the post

mortem over beer. A Jew strongly attracted by Judaism, Jeff hoped to stay awhile in India to complete his study of an equally venerable religious heritage. The only member of the party able to express himself in Hindustani, he boasted several hybrid languages like French-Arabic and Hindi-Hebrew. Mawson, a Politics and Philosophy buff, was nominally here to study India's communist movement. But his real function was to entertain the others.

Assigning university professors and high-ranking professionals to lecture this group was like throwing them to the lions. But they tried, perhaps relishing the challenge. Seminar magazine's creator Romesh Thapar wowed the group with his grasp

of current affairs and the fluency of his replies to questions. Always in command, he annihilated time for the Canadians so that they rose reluctantly when the 90 minutes was up.

There was no question of staying longer that day. The next item on the program was a meeting with the President of India. The President, dapper in an off-white suit, strode into the reception room at Rashtrapati Bhavan, shook hands right down the line, posed for a group photo and spoke a few words. He made the point that when the fellows returned home, they could be ambassadors for India. After Mr Giri left, the Canadians drank tea, then had a lightning tour of the palace, culminating in the darbar room under the dome