

Statement

Discours

Department of  
External  
Affairs



Ministère des  
Affaires  
extérieures

89/20

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

TOAST FOR THE

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,

AT THE DINNER

GIVEN IN HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY TADEUSZ OLECHOWSKI,

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

May 8, 1989.

Secretary of State  
for  
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État  
aux  
Affaires extérieures

Canada

Mr. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with great pleasure that Maureen and I welcome you, Mr. Minister, on your first visit to Canada. Two years ago, almost to the day, we had the privilege of visiting Poland, ending a period in our relations which had been made particularly difficult by the imposition of martial law. We are honoured to have you here today, fresh from the success of the historic round table discussions in Poland.

Your visit is brief, but you had an opportunity to spend some time during the weekend in Toronto and Niagara Falls. That is an introduction to our vast country, and I hope that another visit we will be able to show you more of Canada, including of course the province of Alberta.

In your part of the world, Mr. Olechowski, events are moving rapidly. I was pleased to discuss with you directly today the Round Table process in Poland and the results you hope it will bring. It is important that Canadians, and others, in the international community, know about the changes in Poland and the challenges you face.

Poland's history and culture are remarkable - your music, your art, your culture and science, the tremendous spirit of the Polish people to persevere in the face of historic adversity, time and time again. Everyone who visits Poland is impressed by the visual monuments to dedication and sacrifice; from beautiful cities featuring centuries of splendid architecture to the historical quarter of Warsaw reconstructed so painstakingly after the devastation of World War II.

In this country, Canadians of Polish origin have thrived and greatly contributed to our own society and culture. Poland has long been a major source of immigrants to Canada, with over 400,000 Canadians of Polish ancestry living here. Free travel between our two countries and family reunification have been important, sensitive issues. I am very pleased that family reunification has virtually disappeared as a problem since Poland opened its borders and provided its citizens with regular access to passports for travel abroad. Last year alone nearly 30,000 Polish citizens visited Canada. We look forward to even more in years to come.

Poland's progress in political liberation, human rights and humanitarian cooperation in general has been welcome. Our two countries have established an especially fruitful relationship in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). I can only hope that other countries that still lag behind in these areas will follow Poland's example.

We also share a profound interest in arms control and disarmament. Our two countries have much in common as middle powers seeking to promote and construct a broadly based environment of stability and cooperation in Europe. Our common interests have extended to global peace and security where Canadians and Poles continue to work regularly side by side in various U.N. peacekeeping operations, most recently in Namibia and on the Iran-Iraq border.

Positive change in the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe and between East and West has become almost commonplace in the last several years. We have seen landmark agreements achieved in arms control and in human rights. There has been substantial progress in trade and in economic cooperation. Positive influence has been brought to bear on regional conflicts in many parts of the world. To be sure there is much yet to be accomplished but a good start has been made.

Against the background of the change in Eastern Europe and in East-West relations, Poland has taken the lead in moving towards democratization and the recognition of social and political pluralism. The legalization, in April, of solidarity and other unions together with the upcoming elections in June should result in the most representative form of Government in Eastern Europe. These are steps which Canada strongly supports and applauds. We look forward with great interest to the results of your elections and to further developments in Poland.

At the same time, we understand the economic challenge Poland faces today. The new and constructive political atmosphere brought by recent reforms in Poland points the way to more significant economic liberalization. We hope this trend will be reinforced by a new and generous Paris Club debt rescheduling, an IMF program and new World Bank lending.

We have many opportunities for further cooperation in trade and investment. A number of Canadian companies such as Pratt and Whitney, Hybrid Turkeys and Electrovert are already doing successful business with Poland. Tomorrow, a joint venture will be signed between McLean Brothers Fisheries and a Polish fishing company in Szczecin (Stetshin) - the first between companies of Poland and Canada under your latest joint venture legislation. That legislation opens an important door for practical, profitable cooperation between our two countries. Our government is mounting a small campaign to make more Canadian businesses aware of this new opportunity.

We will launch a promotional program in key Canadian cities to focus on joint venture opportunities in Poland. Bilateral discussions on a Foreign Investment Insurance Agreement to facilitate Canadian private sector investment in Poland are now underway. I look forward to completing arrangements soon on a Double Taxation Treaty with Poland which will further encourage trade and investment between our countries.

More generally, we have discussed today ways in which we can build upon the existing relationship between our two countries. We will encourage more parliamentary exchanges and more frequent and regular consultations between officials. We have agreed to expand our Mixed Economic Commission to include a working group on agriculture and we shall see what kinds of closer cooperation we can establish in the areas of health care, food processing and the pulp and paper industry.

On a more personal note, I look forward to further meetings with you, Mr. Minister, in the near future.

In closing, I should like to propose a toast to your good health and to wish for Poland the prosperity and freedom which Poles have cherished so dearly and strived for throughout their history.

Na Zdrowie (Na Zdro'Vyeh).