

Khrushchov's Fine Words

On August 18, at a meeting in Red Square, Mr. Khrushchov said, toward the end of a long speech welcoming the cosmonauts:

"The experience of recent times shows that if there is the desire to solve complicated international problems on the basis of co-operation, with mutual consideration of the interests of all sides, such co-operation brings rewards."

These are fine words. With negotiated solutions based on "mutual consideration of the interests of all sides", the world could be set on a new course of peace which, in the light of the tremendous technological achievements of recent years, would indeed lead to the stars.

We know from the post-war experience how misleading words can be. How often in the past have we seen the East-West negotiations starting off bravely but foundering sooner or later in waves of propaganda or on the hard rock of Soviet intransigence?

At present, there are East-West negotiations in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee at Geneva. At that conference, Mr. Green has personally explained the Canadian stand on two occasions. Canada has made it plain that the way out of the present impasse is to reduce the mutual suspicion and distrust which stand in the way of agreement, especially on concrete measures of disarmament.

The Disarmament Conference has not made spectacular progress but it has shown very clearly that there are common elements in the positions of the two sides, and that remaining differences can be narrowed. The Committee will recess in two weeks' time. There will be a searching discussion of disarmament questions at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. When the Eighteen-Nation Committee resumes its work in Geneva in November, Canada expects to see a renewed effort to reach significant agreements based on a clear mandate from the General Assembly.

The Soviet Union cannot expect to hold out the hope of peace by uttering fine phrases and at the same time ignoring reasonable proposals for bringing about mutually satisfactory solutions. The Western powers do not ask the Soviet Union to take any step that will endanger its security. They do ask that the Soviet Government act in its own self-interest by co-operating with Western governments to remove the potential sources of war.

This is a demanding task but there is no rational alternative.