

“Progress in the Field of Commercial Exchanges.”

October 19, 1977.

On the whole, Mr Chairman, Canada is satisfied with the trend in its commercial relations with the countries of Eastern Europe as it appears two years after Helsinki. While it is true that these relations have remained relatively modest in scope, we believe that the progress made in recent years and the outlook for the future are encouraging under the circumstances. The Government of Canada has done what was necessary and what it could do along these lines. Allow me to give an example of this action in the bilateral field, namely the long-term economic co-operation agreement we recently signed with the Soviet Union. I could mention other developments and other measures with a similar orientation. Measures to stimulate or facilitate trade within the framework of a liberal system and interventions in various international organizations — these are all manifestations of the way in which the Government of Canada's activities have been geared to provisions of the Final Act.

Having said this, as others have also said, we must realize that a certain number of concerns or problems remain in trade relations between market-economy countries, including my own, and planned-economy countries. I am thinking of the conception of reciprocity, as it appears in the fifth paragraph of the preamble and elsewhere. I am referring to the difficulty spoken of in the paragraph on safeguards, in the General Provisions. More generally, we must consider the encouragement offered by the General Provisions to the diversification of exchanges. Other difficulties, other stumbling-blocks, of a more specific (I could say a more basic) nature still remain. Here, I am thinking of the progress we must hope to see, particularly in the fields of business contacts and information.