

Supply—External Affairs

What are the implications for Canada of the developments which I have been discussing? First, it must be understood that we are bound by treaty obligations, by tradition and by national interest to the Atlantic world and to those countries which derive historically, economically and politically from western Europe. Interdependence is a fact of international life, and Canadian relations with the communist world are inevitably governed by the general state of relations between the two great military groupings, particularly those of the United States and the Soviet union. It is neither possible nor desirable that our relations with the communist world should be significantly better or worse than the relations of our closest friends and allies with the communist world. Within those limits, however, there are certain possibilities open to us which could serve our interests and those of our allies. I believe profoundly that the long term solution of east-west problems will come through the slow evolution of communist thinking about their own methods and objectives, and about the outside world. It will not help if the Soviet leaders continue to feel that the west is totally alien and implacably hostile. Breaking down this dangerous misconception is the political reason behind our encouragement of cultural and other contacts, and it should also be the political reason for our trade with communist countries.

So for these broad political considerations, as well as for the commercial advantages which accrue to Canada, a country vitally dependent upon its exports, the government intends to allow non-strategic trade with the communist world to develop. We believe that through trade we shall encourage the evolution of institutions and attitudes in the communist countries more favourable to co-operation with the rest of the world.

It is essential, I believe, to assess realistically the elements which have contributed to the better atmosphere which undoubtedly does prevail at the present time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would the minister allow a question? What change has there been in the policy with regard to trade with communist countries in non-strategic materials and commodities? Has there been any change from the policy pursued by the government of which I had the honour to be the head?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I do not think there has been any change.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is what I thought.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I do not think there is any change. I clearly indicated that in the basic Canadian foreign policy there is a continuity of development regardless of

which government is in power. I believe the matters I am now discussing are of such importance that they do not lend themselves to any political advantage, and certainly I am not trying to take any advantage of that kind in this discussion.

Mr. Diefenbaker: We just want the record to be clear.

Mr. Chevrier: It should be clear as to other things, too.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Apart from the critical role of the Cuban crisis in stimulating a re-examination of policies in both the east and the west, the concrete steps taken toward the easing of tensions have in fact been few in number. They consist exclusively of measures to slow down the arms race or reduce the danger of a sudden outbreak of war, but they leave completely unresolved all the political problems which could give rise to war.

The measures are three limited agreements, all falling within the general field, which might be classed as preliminary to disarmament. First, a direct emergency communications system has been established between Washington and Moscow which should do much to ensure that war between east and west does not come about as a result of accident or miscalculation. The difficulty encountered in communicating rapidly at the time of the Cuban crisis was evidently enough to induce the Soviet union to accept this measure, which the United States had first proposed in April, 1962.

Second, there was the Moscow treaty banning nuclear weapons testing in all environments except underground, signed by the United States, Britain and the Soviet union on August 5, 1963. Canada signed the treaty in the capitals of the three depository governments on August 8, 1963. It was an unprecedented first step toward limiting, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the production of nuclear weapons, and of course it carried with it the enormous human dividend of removing the most serious source of radioactive contamination of the atmosphere and seas.

But above all the signature of this treaty by the nuclear powers, and its subsequent acceptance by over 100 states, proved that by patient exploration agreements can be arrived at which serve the interests of both east and west. Its real significance lies in the prospect it holds out for a broader settlement of east-west questions by the same process. On the western side, it was accomplished without any sacrifice of principle or of security, and involved no political concessions. For example, adherence to the Moscow treaty by regimes which are not already recognized by Canada, in no way constituted extension of Canadian recognition to them.