

of course, to an important degree, on our maintaining a policy of friendly and co-operative relations with all Middle Eastern countries. I am confident that such a policy, which carries with it the duty and responsibility of weighing and balancing the problems of the area on their merit, is one which commends itself to the Canadian people and which is understood by all our friends in the Middle East.

At your present convention you have been discussing the theme "The Zionist Programme in a Changing World". In selecting that theme, you have obviously been conscious -- as all of us are bound to be conscious -- of the very significant way in which our world environment is changing and of the need to take these changes into account in our approach to the problems that face us. The pace of change in our world environment could hardly have been brought home to us more graphically than by two recent events of far-reaching significance: the sudden and dramatic change in the Soviet leadership and the first explosion by Communist China of a nuclear device. Since this is the first occasion I have had, outside the House of Commons, of speaking to a Canadian audience since these events took place, I am sure you would wish me to comment on some of their implications, as I see them, for Canada and for the world at large.

I should like first to say something about the developments in the Soviet Union. It is instructive, I think, to compare these with the change of government which took place in Britain at almost the same time. In Britain this change came about as a result of an election, conducted openly and in accordance with the due processes of democratic practice. In the Soviet Union, by contrast, we witnessed the removal from the seat of power of a man who had for many years exercised a dominant role in the leadership of his party and his country with a suddenness and secrecy which surprised and astonished even the closest allies of the Soviet Union. Since this change was brought about, the world has not been allowed to know exactly what happened to Mr. Khrushchov or what, if any, role he might be allowed to continue to play in his own country.

It is inevitable that a change of government in a totalitarian regime should involve elements of surprise, perhaps particularly to the leader who loses power. It is equally inevitable, I think, that such a change of government should bring in its train certain consequential developments, the nature and extent of which it is not easy to foretell in advance. For, although the Soviet system has evolved a good deal since Stalin's time and is not likely to revert to his methods and policies, it remains true that, once the great log of the Soviet state starts rolling, it is difficult to know where and when it will come to rest and who may fall off in the process.

What we can say for the moment -- and it is a matter of some significance -- is that a relatively orderly transfer of power seems to have been accomplished in the Soviet Union on this occasion. The actual circumstances in which these events took place are still shrouded in a curtain of secrecy, as we would expect them to be in a system such as that prevailing in the Soviet Union. Until we have very much more information than we have at the moment, therefore, any attempt at an analysis of these events must, of necessity, remain in the realm of speculation. Nevertheless, the impact which a change in the Soviet leadership could have on world affairs is so important that, with the necessary reservations, such an analysis should be attempted.