

*Report by External Affairs Minister*

It would not be realistic to expect an easing of the tensions quickly, but increasing contacts between east and west, such as the official visits which I have just made, will certainly help. I strongly believe that this is the desire of the countries I visited. I emphasized the Canadian conviction that our friend and ally, the Federal German Republic, was genuinely anxious to improve its relations with the eastern European countries and to make its contribution to the détente.

I know that hon. members will expect me to speak particularly about my discussions on Viet Nam. Let me make it quite clear that I took with me to Warsaw and Moscow no simple, magic formula to bring about an end to the war. This is an infinitely complicated situation. There is no magic formula, and I made that very clear to the people with whom I spoke. I put forward Canadian views repeatedly in great detail and I explained forcefully, on the basis of our very intimate knowledge of the United States and its policies, and on the basis of our abiding friendship for that country, why certain over-simplified suggestions which have been put forward from time to time for ending the war were not the most realistic way of moving toward a settlement, quite apart from the view one might hold as to the merits of the case. I refer, of course, to the proposal for a unilateral decision to stop the bombing of North Viet Nam unconditionally and for good, without any indication as to what the other side might do in return, to start toward de-escalation of the conflict or toward negotiations.

It was suggested that Canada might exert its influence, raise its voice, in order to bring about an end to the bombing. I pointed out that there was an obligation not only on Canada but on all countries to do all they could with those countries with which they have special relations, in an attempt to bring about at least a preliminary basis for negotiation.

I put forward in considerable detail to the Polish and Soviet leaders Canadian views on the possible future role of the Viet Nam Commission, and certain suggestions as to steps which might be taken to lead us away from a military and toward a political settlement.

● (3:30 p.m.)

Our views were listened to most carefully. I am sure that they will be studied attentively in Warsaw and Moscow, just as we will seriously study the positions they took, and I hope

that this in itself will be a modest contribution toward a solution. I cannot say that I detected the prospect of any immediate change in the views of these two communist powers whose interests are so deeply engaged in the Viet Nam question, but I am convinced that they are desirous of reaching a peaceful settlement, amongst other reasons for the beneficial effect this will have on east-west relations in general. Thus, despite very substantial differences between us, there seems to be some identity of view as to the desire to see the conflict brought to an end.

Our discussions were more detailed in respect of Viet Nam than any other subject. I outlined the Canadian government's objectives for the commission and our other efforts to secure peace. I listened to the reactions, particularly of the government of Poland to the Canadian views regarding the role of this commission.

This was my first visit to Poland and to the Soviet union. Even after this brief visit, I think the forces which help to shape the policies of their governments are more clearly discernible. I saw the reconstruction of the historic city of Warsaw, so hideously scarred by war. I saw ancient Krakow and the horror that was Auschwitz, now silent witness to the massacre of how many millions of Jewish people.

I saw Moscow, the vibrant capital of one of the two most powerful countries on earth. I saw Leningrad, that creation of Peter the Great, which lost almost a million of its inhabitants in 900 days of wartime siege. And had it not been for bad weather I would have seen Kiev, the historic capital of the Ukraine.

As I visited all these places and talked with their people, I further confirmed my assessment of what is taking place in eastern Europe—and there is certainly change afoot. My thoughts also turned instinctively to the hundreds of thousands of people in Canada of Polish descent, of Ukrainian and of Russian descent. I understood their love for the countries from which they and their ancestors came, and I understand better some of the sources of the great contributions which they have brought to Canada.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury came to Ottawa a few weeks ago I had the opportunity of discussing with him, as I have with other great religious leaders, the important role which can be played by these heads of vital bodies in the world. I felt I was honoured to be received in Rome by His Holiness the Pope, and was again impressed by his wise and