

This Convention, with such wide participation, is a demonstration that there has been some reduction in international tension in the past few years, for it is improbable that the countries of Eastern Europe would have been so widely represented at any similar congress held as recently as six years ago.

Does not this raise the hope that, although there are no spectacular or magic solutions of world problems, a gradual improvement in the international climate may be attained if there is a continuing exchange of views and visits between the leaders and people of East and West.

I believe that it has been demonstrated that the gulf between the two ideologies can be bridged, for in meeting the problems of health and science there is hope that the gap can be narrowed in the solution of larger and more far-reaching world issues, provided the free world does not weary in negotiation.

I believe that the gap must be narrowed, and that consultation and discussion must take place in order to achieve settlement of international issues which, in creating tension, could spark a conflict that would be disastrous for all mankind.

It is in this spirit that Canadians have agreed to certain reciprocal exchanges of visitors between this country and countries of Eastern Europe.

I believe that a more stable foundation for peace will be laid when there will be lesser barriers to the movement of people across national boundaries, and fewer unjustifiable hindrances to the free flow of ideas and information to all parts of the world.

I have spoken of the importance of negotiation, and I am encouraged by the signs of progress at Geneva, where the Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom, the United States, France and the U.S.S.R. have resumed their discussions.

Continuing Effort

The Canadian Government has repeatedly emphasized the importance of continuing negotiations between East and West, and of the value of the most searching joint examination by East and West of major issues which separate them, provided that no solution will be acceptable which jeopardizes the freedom of the people of West Berlin, or forecloses ultimate German reunification.

It is probable that the Geneva discussions will lead the way to a desirable meeting at the level of heads of government, although there should be no misapprehension that a summit meeting would be a speedy process leading to immediate and far-reaching settlements of differences which encompass the fabric of our political and economic life.