

to be held to these obligations by Canadians as well as by governments whose signatures are affixed to the Final Act with ours. We are prepared to see our performance subjected to scrutiny where it is open to challenge and to bring our laws and our practices into conformity with the obligations we have assumed where that is not already the case.

The dispositions of the Final Act in the matter of human contacts are of special concern to Canadians. We are a country of settlement, some of it recent, and many Canadians have continuing family links in Europe. The Canadian Government has pursued a policy that attaches priority to the reunification of families. It has looked to the Final Act to break the impasse that has often inhibited the pursuit of that policy.

In point of fact, the Final Act has brought about improvements in the past two years. There are still many cases outstanding but we have been encouraged by indications that governments are prepared to take this matter seriously. What is less encouraging is that such progress as has been made is still not automatic. It has been achieved at the cost of considerable effort and even hardship on the part of those desiring to join their families. It is not yet a simple matter for people to move from one country to another if they wish. The administrative barriers are often formidable even where those involved no longer form part of the active working population of their countries. It is our hope that one of the results of our meeting will be a more generous and humane interpretation of the family reunification clauses of the Final Act, not as an exception but as a matter of general policy and practice. If that were achievable here at Belgrade, it would help more than anything else to lend credibility to our efforts in the eyes of Canadians.

Indeed, the factor of credibility could be crucial to public support for détente in Canada. The Final Act may have been signed only two years ago, but some of the problems with which it deals, such as family reunification, have been with us for many more years than that. Canadians thought the Final Act would at long last provide the impetus necessary to deal quickly with this problem. And so to some extent it did. But to the extent it did not, public preoccupation in Canada continues. If governments, in the two years since the Final Act, have been unable to solve such a simple problem, people ask, how much hope is there that they will be able, even given a much longer span of time, to solve the many more difficult problems that the Final Act raises. This kind of skepticism should be a warning to us. Confidence is contagious, but so is want of confidence. If détente is to become permanent, we have to make confidence permanent, not just confidence between states, but the confidence of our citizens that their governments were acting sensibly when they assumed the obligations of the Final Act. Seen in this light, even an apparently limited problem like