

This was the most senior Soviet group to have visited Canada. Their visit to seven of our ten provinces, and the extended tour by Mr. Polyansky of grain-growing areas in the West, will be of considerable importance in terms of the future development of technological exchanges and trade between our two countries.

Even more significant, perhaps, was the opportunity provided for frank political discussions of the respective policies of the Soviet Union and Canada.

Political Dialogue

I do not suggest, of course, that contacts, exchanges and visits by themselves necessarily indicate that significant political discussion of the main international problems has increased. Progress in this latter area is inevitably much slower.

I do feel, however, that progress is being made. One of the reasons for this may be that Soviet representatives are trying to clarify certain difficult questions about relations between Communist and other nations.

I recall, for example, what the Soviet Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Shpedko, said, at a conference in Toronto two years ago:

"The principle of peaceful coexistence does not at all require from any state the renunciation of its established system and ideology. One should not identify the problem of ideological struggle with the question of relations between states. The main tenet of peaceful coexistence is to confine the struggle to the ideological level and not to resort to force to prove your point."

There are still many aspects of "peaceful coexistence" as proclaimed and practised which I find it hard to understand or which concern me. Canadians have had experience in recent years in the United Nations in consulting with Czechs and Yugoslavs over attempts to relate the principles of coexistence to the codification and progressive development of international law. It is not easy to reach agreement on some of these long-term ideological, legal or philosophical questions.

Nevertheless, I welcome the emphasis on specific questions arising between states. I think that the conditions for businesslike discussions of international affairs are improving. I value the impressions derived from contacts with individual leaders of foreign countries. I have found no hostility towards Canada in any of my recent conversations with Soviet or other East European representatives but, on the contrary, a real desire to develop new areas of agreement.

Perhaps the immediate prospects, for us as for other Western countries, are for agreements on marginal matters only. We are not likely to approach the central questions, however, except by successful solution of marginal matters, nor are we likely to solve the central questions eventually if we do not continually probe the current positions of the powers concerned....