

Hull, Quebec and that association has enriched the understanding of the francophone dimension of Canada among my neighbours. Vancouver is twinned with the city of Odessa on the Black Sea in the Soviet Union — an association that has facilitated contacts between citizens of the two cities, thus enhancing East-West understanding. St. Catherines is twinned with Port of Spain; Mississauga with Kariya, Japan; Windsor with Ohrid, Yugoslavia.

Even provinces are twinning. In 1981 Alberta twinned with the Northern province of Heilongjiang in China — an association that resulted in a recent \$7 million sale of oil field equipment to China. Saskatchewan has a formal link with the northeastern Chinese province of Jilin. In March, the Ontario Government announced it would twin with the highly industrialized south coastal province of Jiangsu in China, where the province will also establish a technology and trade office.

There seems little doubt that twinning is becoming popular — for both cultural and commercial reasons. But the concept has an even greater potential when applied to the easing of tensions and mistrust that characterize international relations today.

I would like to suggest that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities consider ways of expanding the twinning process so that many more Canadian municipalities decide to twin with Soviet and East European municipalities. This would be a concrete step in improving East-West relations that could be taken at the local level. The very core of the idea of twinning is people in one community getting to know and appreciate the people in a similar community. The essential requirement is to stimulate the interest of people in extending human contacts.

On the national level, governments attempt to bridge chasms through state visits, bilateral discussions, exchanges of notes or memorandums of understanding on various issues. The recent successful visit of External Affairs Minister Clark to the Soviet Union demonstrated the crucial importance and continued necessity of high-level visits. In Moscow, Mr. Clark stressed:

“...even where differences exist, consensus can be built upon a foundation of mutual understanding and areas of common purpose.”