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COMMITTEE OF INFORMATION AND CULTURAL RELATIONS
PUBLIC REACTION IN CANADA TO RECENT SOVIET MOVES

Note by the Canadian Delegation

A survey of representative comments in the press of Canada since the Geneva Conference would indicate that public reaction in Canada towards the new Soviet approach to the West has been one of cautious optimism. While the new trend in Soviet policy has been generally welcomed, hopeful editorials and news articles have usually been tempered by an attitude of "wait and see", by reminders that the Communist and Western worlds are still far apart and that problems remain great, and by warnings that Canada and NATO cannot afford to relax vigilance.

2. The announcement that Czechoslovakia will provide arms to Egypt prompted considerable editorial comment questioning the sincerity of the peaceful intentions of the USSR. There has been little comment so far on the attitude which NATO should adopt towards the so-called détente.

3. One indication that Canadian public opinion is perhaps more friendly towards the Soviet Union than it was a year ago is that newspapers throughout the country deplored the demonstration by the Ukrainian nationalists in Winnipeg against the visiting Soviet agriculturalists.

4. In the short time available, we are unable to comment in detail on most of the specific points raised in Document PO/55/800. However, on the question of the attitude of trade unions towards Communism, there is some evidence that there has been no significant change in Canada in recent months. On October 12th, the Canadian Congress of Labour at its annual convention voted overwhelmingly against a proposal for negotiations between the ICFTU and the Communist-dominated WFTU.

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