

Canada faces Russia unsheltered by the United States

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Peter Desbarats
Ottawa editor

OTTAWA — No spectacular break-throughs are expected next week when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin and their advisers face each other across the bargaining table. The working sessions of the visit will occupy Monday and Tuesday mornings, according to the schedule released last week, and they will be devoted to a wide range of practical concerns that reflect the growing scope and complexity of relations between the two countries.

Officials here this week were at pains to depict the visit in the context of the long-term normalization of Soviet-Canadian relations, a process that has been underway since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1942.

It is also seen as accelerating the

tempo of Soviet-Canadian contacts as did Prime Minister Trudeau's visit to Russia last spring.

Premier Kosygin's quick acceptance of the Canadian invitation to visit Canada is one reason for modest expectations about achievements at the negotiations next week.

In fact, both countries are still digesting and utilizing the landmark agreement on Co-operation in the Industrial Application of Science and Technology that was signed only last January.

Six working groups have now been set up to deal with exchanges in

various fields, but the full impact of the agreement has yet to be felt in either country. There has been discussion of a General Exchanges Agreement to cover cultural exchanges, but it is not known whether this will be signed in Ottawa next week or whether the two heads of government will merely issue a statement supporting the principle of such an agreement.

There has also been some discussion of an "umbrella treaty" that would cover many areas of dealing between the two countries. Canada backed away from this kind of pro-

posal last spring and appears to be still inspecting it from a safe distance.

Opposed to the Soviet preference for "institutionalizing" relations between countries is a Canadian preference for dealing with things on a case-by-case basis or by specialized agreements restricted to specific fields.

There is no shortage of specific material for the Trudeau-Kosygin meetings. The two briefing books prepared for the Canadian Prime Minister list 50 possible areas of discussion and negotiation. An important one, in the Russian books, will be Canada's favorable trade balance with the Soviet Union—\$101 million of Canadian exports in 1970 against \$9,000,000 of imports. Although the over-all picture is favorable to Cana-

da, there is some concern here about the proportion of Canadian exports represented by wheat—\$86 million in 1970. A desire to impress the Russians with Canada's industrial capacity is evident in the itinerary arranged for Kosygin outside of Ottawa.

Although the visit was arranged before U.S. President Richard Nixon's new economic program was announced in mid-August, its timing is appropriate. At a press conference in Moscow last May, Trudeau referred to the "over-powering presence" of the United States in Canada and the "growing consciousness amongst Canadians of the danger to our national identity from a cultural, economic and perhaps even military point of view."

Next week, with the economic

danger far more evident than it was last spring, Canada will bargain with the Soviet Union in a position of much greater isolation than we have been accustomed to or than most of us appreciate.

We will face one of the world's most powerful nations relatively unsheltered by the interest of a "mother" or "brother" nation, as in the past.

There is an instinctive fear of this isolation among Canadians at the moment. Among some, there is even a blind movement toward the United States to seek out a lost sense of comfort and shelter and blessed irresponsibility. But this reflex is weakening, its impotence apparent, as world events seem to be impelling us toward the independence that we have always said that we craved.