

record of a Colonial Empire being transformed to an association of free nations by experiment, by compromise, by political evolution. I have no doubt that, whatever its future, it will be regarded by the historians of another age as one of the great constructive political achievements of our time. The other fact that I would call to your mind is that the Commonwealth is in a very real sense an achievement in which Canadians can take special pride. We Canadians, perhaps more than any other of its members, have contributed to its development. We have regarded it as an instrument which, in co-operation with like-minded people, we could use for our common purposes. It has, therefore, the vitality of a living, functioning organism which has been and which can continue to be used for good, according to the wisdom and foresight of our policies.

It is now only twenty years since the term "Commonwealth" came into popular use as a result of the Declaration which was adopted by the Conference of 1926. Even in that short period the meaning of the word has changed. There are already important differences between the Commonwealth of today and that described in Lord Balfour's famous statement. Even while this change was taking place however, there has been a further compelling demonstration of the fact that we are members in an association of free nations, capable of common action in an emergency, greater and more striking than that of any formal military or diplomatic alliance that the world has ever known.

Even though they are not precisely defined, the principles on which we act in regard to the Commonwealth may be clearly discerned. We seek to preserve it as an instrument through which we, with others who share our objectives, can co-operate for our common good in peace as in war. On the other hand, we should continue to resist, as in the past, efforts to reduce to formal terms or specific commitments this association which has demonstrated its vitality through the common understanding upon which it is based. We should likewise oppose developments in our Commonwealth relations which might be inconsistent with our desire to participate fully in the task of building an effective international organization on a wider scale.

Within the Commonwealth, our relations with the United Kingdom have, of course, a very special value and significance. We shall not forget in our history, the imaginative collaboration of British and Canadian leaders who, a century ago, laid the political foundations for the modern Commonwealth. Nor can we fail to be influenced by the fact that our political institutions are those of the British Isles, and that we now share with other parliamentary democracies the responsibility for preserving and developing this system. We shall not forget either the peril in which we shared, together with other Commonwealth countries, but especially with the United Kingdom during the dark days of 1940. This was an episode which threw in dramatic relief the measure to which we have common interests and the degree to which we are alike concerned in the establishment of a world order based on principles of freedom.

b) The United States - the Settlement of International Affairs by Negotiation and Compromise

It is not customary in this country for us to think in terms of having a policy in regard to the United States.