

Because these men met at a particularly anxious time in the Far East, one may be sure that much serious attention was given to the complex and stubborn problems of that area. One may be certain, too, that the Asians among them put forward their own views of the courses best calculated to relieve the tensions which had been mounting rapidly in the preceding weeks between the United States and Communist China. One may be equally confident that those about the table who were close allies of the United States - the only North American present, your ANZUS partners and that tireless champion of Anglo-American friendship, the Chairman himself - would not have failed to explain the viewpoint of the United States. We know, too, that the implications for all nations of the military and peaceful employment of nuclear energy were discussed. Indeed, in such a company, it may be assumed that none of the great problems confronting governments throughout the world were wholly ignored or avoided.

The public were given little solid report of what transpired at these nine days meetings of Prime Ministers. One declaration was made on behalf of the Conference before its end. But it had to do with a matter which was in a sense domestic to the loose society which the participants comprised. It reported the intention of Pakistan to alter her form of government from monarchy to republic and her desire, none the less, to continue her full membership in the Commonwealth of Nations. It recorded the acceptance of this new situation by the other governments. When the meetings were over a final communique was also made public. This was a wide-ranging statement, with here and there a dash of Churchill himself. It touched upon many if not all of the gravest topics of international concern. But it was couched for the most part in the most general terms and contained little that was specific. It made it clear that the Commonwealth governments were in favour of peace and against war, in favour of liberty and against slavery, in favour of plenty and against scarcity. In fact they were in favour of righteousness and against sin! But in this final statement one will seek in vain agreed solutions for particular problems or the delineation of common policies. It may safely be added that the secret records of these meetings would make it evident that no such decisions had been sought.

Beyond these two somewhat unexciting statements, the public were given little indication of what went on over those nine days in London other than the usual group photographs, centering round a young and beautiful Queen. There were, of course, many columns of speculative comment from a great number of well-informed - and not so well-informed - journalists.

To the world outside it may have seemed strange that eight such busy heads of governments, harassed by the pressures of their own problems, should take such time and make such effort to come together, to produce such apparently insubstantial results. Yet the final communique, whatever its vagueness, makes it clear that all the Prime Ministers regarded their meetings as well