

wanted to make it so and because we have learned by experience that we can trust each other. The engineers who have built the indestructible bridges of understanding between us have numbered among their company a good many itinerant scholars who have ventured out from their own immediate world in search of inspiration elsewhere, in search of stimulating and challenging new horizons.

To a Canadian, and especially to a Canadian whose most immediate concerns are those of my own portfolio, there are other bridges of tolerance and understanding spanning the world, no less important than those which span the 49th parallel. I refer to the Commonwealth, that association of independent nations which has emerged with a new sense of vitality from an imperial organization of an earlier time. It is not my intention to try to reveal to you, as Canadians before American audiences are so often willing to do, the mysteries of the nature of the Commonwealth. Rather, I prefer in these august academic surroundings to deal with facts and in the contemporary international scene, there are few more compelling facts than the existence of the Commonwealth and its potential influence as a force for peace and goodwill throughout the world. In the Commonwealth, Canadians see not a power bloc, or a pressure group, or a militant lobby which might serve as a means of imposing our wishes on others. We see instead a loose and flexible and friendly channel of communication between diverse areas and peoples of the world. With the rapid rise to independent status of so many new national units in recent years, there has been the ever-present danger of a breakdown of communication between these and the older nations of the international community. There has been the danger of erecting, in response to resurgent and militant nationalisms, national barriers and ramparts of prejudice which can be as dangerous in one sense as the most lethal machines of destruction. The Commonwealth, I maintain proudly as one who numbers himself as one of its citizens, has by its very nature exercised a moderating effect on some of these trends. In making this assertion I do not speak in a patronizing spirit of something which the white, Anglo-Saxon, natively English-speaking members of the Commonwealth family have achieved. On the contrary, the achievement, if it can be termed such, is really that of all members of the Commonwealth on the basis of complete equality, for their decision to remain in this association is one which each has taken without compulsion. To the question, why do the members of the Commonwealth stay together in this peculiar association, there is a very simple answer which is not unlike the answer to the question, why do Canada and the United States get on so well together; because they want to; because the leaders of these nations recognize that in the channels of friendly exchange and interchange available through Commonwealth membership, there exist opportunities which might otherwise be unavailable, or at least more difficult of attainment, for correcting the myopic perspectives which often afflict the vision of national governments.