

interested in knowing whether the criticisms of my statements expressed by these hon. gentlemen are their own views, whether they are speaking for themselves or speaking for the party to which they belong. It so happens that the leader of the Progressive Conservative party has made rather definite statements on all these matters, and I think it is important that these statements should be presented to the house in order that hon. members will realize, if the debate continues along the line it has taken to-day, that, in their criticism directed towards me, hon. gentlemen, as a matter of fact, have been criticizing their own leader. I think we are entitled to know what is the policy of the Progressive Conservative party on these all-important matters. In *Maclean's Magazine* of May 1, 1944, there is a statement of policy published in the name of Mr. John Bracken. I propose to read the questions that were put to Mr. Bracken, and the answers he gave. I assume that this article was published by the magazine in order to place the position of the different parties before the country. Question No. 13, as it appears in *Maclean's*, reads:

What should Canada's relationship be to Britain and the British commonwealth?

Answer: It should be that of an adult member of the commonwealth family. She should cooperate generously but she should retain the right to make her own decisions. She is bound, however, to the other members of the family by the ties which hold together any household that is loyal to worthy traditions and which looks back with pride to a good heritage. Canada's attitude should be one of willing and cheerful cooperation with other parts of the British commonwealth, freely associating with them and seeking every possible means to further the trade and peace and progress of the world, but wholly autonomous in her relations with them.

(14) Question: Should the commonwealth set up an imperial council, as suggested by Australian Prime Minister John Curtin? If so, should this council have executive or merely advisory functions? Should its decisions be binding on commonwealth members?

Answer: I am in favour of strengthening the ties which bind the nations of the commonwealth together and I believe that a technique of continuous consultation in matters of common interest should be developed. The present arrangements I regard as inadequate; we fight wars but we don't help prevent them. I believe in frequent commonwealth conferences and closer cooperation toward common objectives of a constructive character but I do not favour the establishment of any permanent agency which would unduly centralize the influence or increase the rigidity of the commonwealth structure. Such conferences as are held should be advisory and consultative and their findings should not be binding unless approved by parliament.

(15) Question: Should Canada be committed to fight in defence of the interests of any part of the commonwealth?

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

That was the point dealt with by the hon. member for St. John-Albert in the latter part of his remarks.

Answer: Does this mean a prior commitment? I do not think the Canadian people would agree to a commitment which might precipitate them into a war, the causes or consequences of which they could not foresee.

In the commonwealth councils our efforts should be directed toward preventing war. In the contingency you raise, that of war affecting the interests of any part of the commonwealth, our position would inevitably incline us to aid in preventing unjust aggression; but the decision should rest with the Canadian parliament. It would then know the existing circumstances. It would then know, for example, whether the structure of the commonwealth was in danger, any international covenant to which we might have subscribed broken, and the degree to which our interests were affected. In the light of such circumstances it should make its decision.

(16) Question: At last year's session of parliament two opposing views on foreign policy became apparent—one, that commonwealth nations should speak with "one voice" in world affairs; the other, that Canada should develop her own foreign policy, which might not necessarily agree with the foreign policy of other commonwealth nations. What is your own view on this issue?

Answer: This question suggests there are only two alternatives. This is not necessarily so. In my opinion the best means for Canada to influence world affairs at the moment is in two directions; through her influence in the commonwealth family and through her individual relationships with all other nations, particularly the United States. These commonwealth nations should endeavour to reach common agreement with respect to peace, trade and other matters and I would hope they would generally succeed; but they should not be required to accept majority decisions except on the approval of their parliaments and they should not be denied consultation with other nations. In my opinion that is the most sane and practical mode of cooperation within the commonwealth and the most acceptable form or relationship with other nations. But our parliament must continue to be free to determine its own course.

There is a pronouncement on each of the three main issues which have been raised by hon. gentlemen opposite in attempted criticism of my position; and, in attacking me, in reality they have been attacking their own leader. It is about time we had someone from the opposite side tell us whether the hon. gentlemen who have spoken from the official opposition to-day were speaking as members of the Progressive Conservative party and in doing so were enunciating its policy; and, if so, on what grounds they justify their complete opposition to the position taken by their leader.

Mr. GRAYDON: Mr. Chairman, may I just say one word—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has the floor.