

multilateral programs, Commonwealth assistance is often of critical value. The Commonwealth is thus an effective and efficient multilateral channel for aid.

Canada actively supports each of these programs to which I have referred. We also contribute to Commonwealth development in the Secretariat, where Canadians fill positions at various levels. A former Torontonion, Arnold Smith, has been Secretary-General for ten years, and has rendered outstanding service to the Commonwealth.

But Canadian support rests on a variety of other considerations as well. The lines of communication, established over the years, and the conventions that govern its activities are tried and tested instruments for diplomatic concourse. The association provides, through its evolution, a unique forum where members discuss and exchange views in complete candour and informality, on a basis of full equality. The practice of understanding differences and resolving problems, of seeking constructive solutions by agreement rather than by voting, brings members together, rather than dividing them; this cohesion reinforces Commonwealth endeavour and makes co-operation easier. The Commonwealth allows us considerable latitude for action in a body where no super-power is a member. We understand the way it works. It is worth our while.

The Commonwealth provides access to, and makes us beneficiary of, ideas and experience, and a formidable repository of collective knowledge. The association facilitates relations with member countries, and gives an added dimension to our bilateral relations. It acts as an antidote and counterweight to continental drift. The Commonwealth remains useful as a sounding-board for our ideas, for gauging the response of members, and for calculating the likely response in larger forums. It is, as well, a source of ideas in itself. It provides a particular perspective on international questions and, within the limits to which any international assembly is subject, a vehicle for their possible solution or amelioration.

The ideas and experiences exchanged and the program operations may not be critical to continued Canadian development. They are, however, useful and do influence, however moderately, the pattern of development in Canada.

Within the ambit of Canadian foreign policy, the Commonwealth provides one outlet for the national personality to be given some manifestation abroad. In this respect, the Commonwealth

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