

Supply—External Affairs

credit to our enemies but that we sold on a cash basis to our friends. These are changes—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I am sure the right hon. gentleman must be in error and I would be grateful if he would quote the statement he now attributes to me in that context.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I do not have it before me, but I have a perfect recollection of its being said. I am complimenting the hon. gentleman. He should not take umbrage. There has been a change of opinion in this regard.

Then there was mention of the need for preserving within the commonwealth the principle of the acceptance of a colour-blind commonwealth. This was the stand we took before the commonwealth prime ministers conference. This was the stand which was so strongly criticized both in this house and outside it. We took the position firmly and definitely that within a commonwealth increasingly comprising people of so many races and colours no other principle would be acceptable. We asked South Africa to change its apartheid rules even to a slight degree. We asked South Africa to give its 12 million coloured people and negroes, three representatives in the parliament of their country so that they would have the opportunity of presenting their views. That was denied. We did not ask South Africa to leave the commonwealth. That was a decision of the prime minister and of the foreign minister of that country at the conference in 1961. What we asked was that they recognize the fact that, wherever discrimination is practised, there are the incipient beginnings and incubation of communism and its acceptance.

Today, the idea of a colour-blind commonwealth is acceptable, though two years ago, when the government of which I had the honour to be prime minister advocated this principle, we were criticized for dismembering the commonwealth. It could not have survived without that principle. The Secretary of State for External Affairs mentioned that there are 16 members today. When I first became prime minister, I think the number was nine. If we ever allowed ourselves the luxury of a vote to determine any matter in the prime ministers conference, that would be the end of the conference and, ultimately, of the commonwealth.

My own view was: let us look to the future; let us recognize that everywhere in the world the spirit of freedom has been aroused in all the races of man; do not let us say, with five out of six of the individuals in the commonwealth belonging to coloured races, that the principle of non-discrimination should be denied. We did not say that, in the heart, there might not be discrimination; but

we said that when discrimination is an integral part of the policy of any of the nations, such a policy was inconsistent with the principles of the commonwealth and with the maintenance of peace within the commonwealth.

The minister referred to the decision of the government to expand the assistance planned for those who live in countries which were formerly French colonies. That was the stand we took. We believe in the bicultural relationship of our country and determined on a course of action in that regard. What is now being done is to extend the amount on the basis of a principle which we adopted.

I do not bring these matters to the attention of the house for the purpose of referring to the past, except as the past shows us a course for the future. It is much harder to speak from this side of the house on the subject of foreign affairs than it is from the government side. The Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) have access to information far and beyond anything which is available to other members. And that is proper. We do not know the facts as the government knows them. A committee has been set up to look into the whole field of foreign affairs. I hope there will be full discussion in that committee. Today, when I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs two or three questions he was frank in his answers and if the same attitude is adopted in the committee it will be most beneficial. He mentioned the new spirit of Moscow had considerably changed since August, when the badminton game was played in the Crimea. There have been abrupt, even ominous changes. Why these changes have been made, we do not know. It may be Chairman Khrushchev is trying to place responsibility for his national and internal problems on the west. It may be that his agricultural policy having failed, he must find a scapegoat in other parts of the world.

It may be he is endeavouring to bring about closer relations with communist China, although certainly those relations today, if interpreted on the basis of what is being said, are far from as agreeable as one might expect between two great communist states. However, Khrushchev made this statement the other day, and I think it is in keeping with what the Secretary of State for External Affairs has said:

We do have disputes and differences with the Chinese comrades but our main difference is that with capitalism. Although there are differences between us and our Chinese brothers we stand together on the main issue. We are against capitalism... We are for socialism and communism. We have one path, that of our common struggle against capitalism, for the victory of communism throughout the world.