

2. Because of the considerable expansion of membership of the United Nations during the last two years there is a likelihood that conventions governing the allocation of seats will break down or be disregarded. It is important, however, to attempt to maintain the institution of a Commonwealth seat, not only because it contributes to Commonwealth solidarity but also because it affords by far the best opportunity for countries like Canada to have a regular opportunity to serve on the Council. But by the same token it is in our own interest to do all we can to ensure that the newer members of the Commonwealth, without whose participation the statistical justification for a Commonwealth seat in an expanded United Nations would disappear, are convinced that it is to their advantage to remain on the Commonwealth roster. For this reason some thought has been given to the desirability of yielding our turn to one of the Asian members and in particular to India (since at this stage Ceylon appears neither well equipped nor anxious to assume such heavy responsibilities) and of standing for election to the Council two years later.

3. The principal advantages of such a course are:

(a) It might serve to arrest any tendency on the part of Asian members to drift away from the Commonwealth roster on to the roster of an Asian seat should one be provided by amendment of the Charter.

It would also constitute effective evidence of our understanding of the legitimate aspirations of the Asian members of the Commonwealth and be well calculated to strengthen their belief in the value of Commonwealth association.

(b) It would afford opportunity for Asia, which is undoubtedly under-represented at present, to be represented on the Council without interference with existing conventional allocation of seats while in the interim it might be possible to reach agreement on an expansion of the membership of the Council.

(c) It would relieve us from accepting further burdensome responsibilities at a time when our available resources are already under severe strain. Two years from now our present engagements in Indo-China and the Middle East may be substantially reduced, whereas membership in the Security Council in 1958-9 would inevitably involve us in a great many additional complex and difficult disputes one of which, the question of Kashmir, is particularly embarrassing for a Commonwealth country.

4. Soundings were accordingly taken to determine what would be the reaction of some of our principal friends and allies if we were to stand down. As a result it has become clear that, among others, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the United States would very much prefer Canada to be a candidate because, even though they recognize the force of arguments in favour of passing the seat to Asia, they believe that the next two years will be particularly important for determining the future role of the United Nations. Moreover India has indicated that it would be glad to support Canada's candidature for the Security Council and we have had informal indication that Pakistan, while it would vigorously oppose the candidature of India, would readily support that of Canada.

5. There are a number of additional reasons why Canada should consider standing for election, viz:

(a) Canada has played an active role in the United Nations and is regarded by many members as a country which can be counted upon to help find acceptable solutions to difficult problems; if we run, therefore, our chances for election appear to be very good.

(b) If in the next few years the "Gentlemen's Agreement" is to break down we might, in addition to losing the principle of a Commonwealth seat, forfeit our opportunity to serve on the Security Council for a long time to come.