

to argue the point now. But I would like to repeat something said recently by one of our most respected diplomatists. He suggested that the Commonwealth's course is not set one way or another but that its role and function depend heavily at any given time on a conscious act of will on the part of all of us. "I believe," he said, "that there is a reality in the personal relationships in diplomacy among Commonwealth countries. At the risk of sounding theological, I believe it because I have experienced it. At least", he continued, "there is a reality for believers."

It seems to me that this Conference is an example of an act of will, of a decision to stay in touch with one another, to trust one another, to work together as a community. I believe the Commonwealth is an association which is moving towards a fuller agreement on the few great moral issues that really matter.

We Canadians find ourselves happy as one of its senior members. This Conference brings home to us its nature and genius. It would, I think, be quite impossible to assemble representatives of thirty-four countries and territories whose relations were those of foreign states, in a gathering as intimate and informal as this one. Our membership in the Commonwealth makes it possible. Our Conference will, I have no doubt, achieve its primary purpose, but it will do something else as well. It will help to bring Commonwealth countries closer together. It will help to strengthen those bonds of friendship among us which Edmund Burke described in a familiar phrase as "light as air but strong as links of iron." If this be true, none could be happier than your Canadian hosts.

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