



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA AND THE COMMONWEALTH

The following are excerpts from a speech by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. J.G. Diefenbaker, to the Commonwealth and Empire Industries Association at the Royal Albert Hall in London, on November 4, 1958.

... I believe that the bonds which unite the members of this family of nations must be strengthened, and bonds being intangible, and in many respects personal, can be truly strengthened by personal contact and conversation, personal visitation and relation, by constant care and cultivation. Without these things, they soon wither. My visit is designed to contribute in this way whatever I am able to those intangible yet vital bonds that unite us in common purpose, and to learn at first hand of the problems and conditions of our Commonwealth associates in order that Canada may understand the better how it can effectively contribute to the welfare and advancement of all, and fully play its part in the achievement of a living, vital Commonwealth of Nations. In short, I want to know the problems of the other countries in a personal way.

I say, "in a personal way," for I am firmly of the belief that relations between countries within the Commonwealth or otherwise, are best built and fostered by personal contact by national leaders as by exchanges in every walk of life. Friendliness, knowledge and tolerance hold nations and peoples together and break down the barriers of misunderstanding.

Over the centuries, the genius for government of Englishmen created an empire which in this century and generation, by the exercise of wisdom and humanity has become the most improbable, and yet most noble association of all--a partnership of free peoples, in unity but not in political uniformity. Its ark of the covenant is the preservation of freedom. Despite differences of race, of creed, of colour, of history, of economic and political development, this partnership of free and independent nations dedicated to common ideals and purposes, is united in