

Because we rejected the revolution, we retained the ties with England and this has inclined us to Europe when external affairs are being discussed. You not only cut the ties, you did your utmost to seal yourselves off from all European difficulties. This attitude coloured the American viewpoint and we imagine that it is more difficult, even in 1952, for the average American to fix his mind on the problems of Europe than it is for the average Canadian. Canada has retained not only her connection with the British Crown, but her connection with the countries of the Commonwealth, former colonies of Great Britain and now independent nations. Another result of it is that we engaged in the two world wars from the beginning, and I suppose to this extent offended the Munroe doctrine before you did.

The concept of the Commonwealth is, I am afraid, seriously misunderstood by some people outside of the association itself. No one, as far as I know, has ever attempted to define in precise terms Canada's association with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has variously been described as a "form of political association which is unique" and "without parallel in the contemporary world". It has been referred to as "the only case on record of a colonial empire being transformed to an association of free nations by experience, by compromise and by political evolution". Canadians are proud of their membership in this association and of the part which they have played in its creation. We regard it as a vital living organism which the members of the Commonwealth throughout the world can, in co-operation with like-minded countries, use for our common good.

Canada realizes that many advantages are to be derived from Commonwealth membership. The principal of these is the broader grasp of world movements which results from the constant exchange of views with other members. It has now become almost a platitude to declare that one of the greatest values of the Commonwealth as it is constituted today is that it provides a bridge, almost the only bridge, between the democracies of the West and the democracies of Asia. The close contact that it affords the Western members with the Asian members is particularly valuable, both in counter-acting any tendency to insularity on the part of Western members and in enabling them to explain their points of view to the Eastern members. In a world so fraught with divisions and misunderstandings, it is a decided advantage that there should be such a common bond of intimacy and complete equality between the East and the West. Canada wishes to see this bond maintained and strengthened, not only in the interest of the members of the Commonwealth but in the interest of all free nations.

During the period when the present structure of the Commonwealth was being determined, Canada always tried to guide the Commonwealth's development in a direction consistent with Canadian national aspirations. Canadians feel that they acted, on the whole, as a moderating influence between those members which would have preferred a greater degree of centralization and those which were uncertain about retaining their membership in the Commonwealth at all. There have been in the past some members who have advocated a closer-knit organization with a centralized machinery which would have given institutional form to the already close and continuous, but often informal, co-operation which existed between members of the Commonwealth. Canada has consistently opposed these proposals. We believe