

forms to meet new problems as they arise. It may well face even more difficult tests in the future. I hope it will meet them successfully because this association has, I think, importance and value for more than its members.

So far, in spite of its anomalies, the Commonwealth has worked. The Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. St. Laurent, in our House of Commons said this:

"I think that the real link between the various members of the Commonwealth is their common ideals, their memories of association in the past, their intimate conviction that that association in the past has been for the benefit of their people, and their desire to conserve that association in the future for the benefit of their people. I do not think that we are being presumptuous or conceited when we believe, and even when we express the belief, that this Commonwealth group not only works for the benefit of its own peoples but is an effective instrument for the good of free mankind throughout the whole world."

Most Canadians would say that the central reason why the Commonwealth persists (despite occasional gloomy predictions that its days are numbered) is due as much as anything to the absence of formal and binding central machinery, and to the flexibility and freedom of its working arrangements. The Commonwealth has, for instance, no common legislation, no binding defence agreements, no Chiefs of Staff Committee, no common tariff structure, no central foreign office.

There seems to be a good deal of perplexity in other countries about this absence of central institutions - of "organization". We feel, however, that everything that it is possible to do through the Commonwealth, can be done without such formal, rigid institutions, which might prejudice the freedom of the separate parts. It is the consensus of Commonwealth opinion that the conduct of each member's own affairs would be made more difficult - if not quite impossible - if such formal institutions existed; and that this, in its turn, would make a free and co-operative association difficult to maintain.

The Commonwealth has shown in the past - and is showing today - that - notwithstanding its informal, almost casual structure - it is an association capable of contributing in no small measure to the strength and stability of the free world.

Defence is an example of this. Twice, in the past thirty years, the countries of the Commonwealth have risen in times of crisis and have given strength to the free world when it was sorely tried. They have repeatedly shown that they can muster great power and resources in war. They have co-operated effectively to resist aggression.

Yet we in Canada have never regarded the Commonwealth, primarily, as an instrument for organizing our common security on the basis of our collective strength. We do not consider it so today. The security of all parts of the