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THE COMMONWEALTH

Consultation among the Commonwealth nations on questions of common interest has continued to be close and frequent. As usual, discussions have been carried on chiefly through the resident high commissioners in the various capitals. A meeting of Finance Ministers took place in January at Sydney, Australia, and it has been agreed to hold a Prime Ministers' Meeting at London, opening on January 31, 1955. This will provide an opportunity to review international developments since the Prime Ministers' Meeting of June 1953. In the scientific field, a Commonwealth Oceanographic Conference was held at Wormley, England, in October.

Besides these official exchanges of views, a number of visits have taken place which afforded opportunities for informal discussions.

The Prime Minister's visits to the United Kingdom, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon in the early part of the year reflected Canadian interest in the problems and aspirations of these sister nations. During a fortnight in the Asian countries of the Commonwealth he met and talked with government leaders and others, spoke to the people through the press and radio, and gained first-hand insight into the political and economic problems of the region.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Sir Winston Churchill and Mr. (now Sir) Anthony Eden, spent three days at Ottawa in June; they attended a meeting of the Cabinet and had informal exchanges of views with Canadian ministers on questions of mutual interest. In October Viscount Swinton, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, travelled across Canada and had talks at Ottawa with the Prime Minister and other members of the Government.

Other prominent Commonwealth visitors to Canada were the Vice-President of India, Dr. Saravapalli Radhakrishnan, and the Prime Minister of Ceylon, Sir John Kotelawala. A visit from the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammed Ali, had to be postponed until 1955.

The meeting at Ottawa of the Consultative Committee on Co-operative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia was attended by ministers and senior officials from several Commonwealth countries, including the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Right Hon. R. G. Casey; the Indian Minister of Finance, Hon. C. Deshmukh; the Pakistan Minister of Finance, Hon. Chaudhri Mohammed Ali; the Ceylonese Minister of Finance, Hon. M. D. H. Jayawardene; and the United Kingdom Minister of State, Foreign Office, the Marquess of Reading.

While visits from members of the Royal Family are rather domestic than external affairs, mention might be made here of the Duke of Edinburgh's visit in August to attend the British Empire Games in Vancouver, of the visit, also in August, by the Duchess of Kent and Princess Alexandra, and of the Queen Mother's visit to Ottawa in November.