

“New Commonwealth.” The focus of Canadian concerns was South Africa, where race riots and violence occurred early in the year. George Glazebrook of the Commonwealth Division wrote a memo on the subject in March, intended “to hint delicately that there is room for an act of high statesmanship within the Commonwealth” by Canada (Document 356). Canada, Glazebrook suggested, could benefit both the Commonwealth as a whole and, in the long term, South Africa itself, by making the policy of apartheid a subject for discussion at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ meeting in May. The talks in London were inconclusive, but thanks in part to Diefenbaker’s efforts, the communiqué issued at the end of the meeting affirmed that the Commonwealth was a multi-racial association. In July, Bryce reported concern among officials of Asian and African Commonwealth countries “at the possibility of a split between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ members ... over ... South Africa.” One such official “thought it would be much better if there were at least one old white member on the black new side, and that this made Canada’s position of particular importance” (Document 386).

As preparations for the 1961 Prime Ministers’ meeting began in the fall of 1960, it became ever more evident that in order to maintain harmony with the “New Commonwealth,” Canada might have to oppose the British policy of avoiding any discussion of member countries’ internal politics. In November, Diefenbaker stated to Basil Robinson, his liaison with External Affairs, that without some concessions by the South African government on its racial policies, “he could not possibly ... adopt at the next meeting an attitude as tolerant of South Africa as he had before and during the last meeting” (Document 378). Diefenbaker accordingly notified Macmillan of his decision (Document 380). In response, Macmillan sent an impassioned letter, arguing that if South Africa were expelled from the Commonwealth, “[w]e should be condemning the country to further years of apartheid and ever-growing bitterness.” Macmillan claimed that Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra of Malaya, who was held in particularly high esteem by Diefenbaker, was “very much alive to the possibly disastrous effect on the whole Commonwealth structure of the beginning of a break-up now” and so would agree not to “force the issue, at any rate for the time being” (Document 382). From London, however, Canadian High Commissioner George Drew sent a different account of the Tunku’s views (Document 383). The stage had thus been set for a clash between Canadian and British policies on this issue in 1961.

There were few changes in the Department’s senior personnel at home and abroad during 1960. Howard Green and Norman Robertson remained in their posts throughout the year, as did Arnold Heeney in Washington, George Drew in London, Pierre Dupuy in Paris, Chester Ronning in New Delhi, Escott Reid in Bonn, Jules Léger at NATO headquarters in Paris, and Charles Ritchie at the United Nations. David Johnson left Moscow in November, and was replaced by Arnold Smith in January 1961. In Ottawa, George Glazebrook and George Ignatieff joined A. E. Ritchie and E. W. T. Gill as assistant under-secretaries. Marcel Cadieux was appointed deputy under-secretary, a post left vacant by the departure of R. M.