

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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### THE LIVING COMMONWEALTH OF TODAY

An address given at the Commonwealth Trade Conference, Montreal, September 18, 1958, by Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker.

It is a moving and inspiring experience for me to add to the welcome already given by Mr. Fleming to you, the ministers and delegations from so many nations and areas within the Commonwealth.

The question has been asked me several times recently - what good can come from a Commonwealth Conference? What has already been achieved would more than justify this Convention of friendly peoples.

As members of a family it is natural that we do not agree on all things. We may even disagree strongly on some things, but after some experience in international meetings, it is good to know that whatever the disagreements may be, they are of conviction and judgment, not a propaganda habit or with intent to disrupt.

However, the world should know that in one thing we are united, or one thing there is no disagreement. We know that we are fortunate to live outside of the Iron Curtain. We are determined to stay there, and to that end to take action to assure that we shall. We are united in our determination that we shall determine our destiny.

This is a conference and a moment, to which I have long looked forward. This is a moment when representatives of our community of nations are gathered together in a common purpose. That purpose is to increase our understanding of one another's economic problems; to secure among ourselves and with others, the beneficent expansion of trade; to share in some measure each other's burdens; to extend the horizons of mutual assistance; to renew the strength of old friendships and form new ones; and to deepen our awareness of that essential unity in matters of the mind and of the spirit which characterizes the living Commonwealth of today.