

*The Address—Mr. Hanna*

Canada's oldest and strongest ties are with the member nations of the British commonwealth in which we are playing an increasingly important part. Never in the history of the world has there been an organization comparable to the commonwealth for the promotion of peace, freedom, justice and mutual understanding among the diverse peoples of the world. Canadians have a tremendous loyalty to and abiding faith in the commonwealth. We rejoice that the head of the commonwealth is also Queen of Canada. We recall very clearly how the present Prime Minister of Great Britain referred to our own Prime Minister here in this chamber as "the wisest of counsellors and the most loyal of friends".

History very clearly relates how the commonwealth has evolved over the years. The commonwealth is very old in some ways, yet ever new in others. It has proven that it is capable of adapting itself to the needs of the times. It is the only international body in the history of mankind which has survived two major world conflicts and several minor ones. Surely the leaders of the British empire of a century or more ago would scarcely recognize the commonwealth of today. Former ideas of colonial rule, perhaps justifiable in their time and place, have given way to a commonwealth of nations that is the greatest force for enlightened democratic government that the world has ever known.

The Statute of Westminster of 1931 underlined the autonomy and independence of commonwealth nations under the crown. That famous enactment of the British parliament has been the inspiration for the promotion of self-government and freedom all over the globe. In this day and age we are all familiar with the brilliant array of new commonwealth partners that have developed or are developing at the present time their own particular institutions of self-government under the guiding hand of the mother of parliaments at Westminster. This in itself is powerful testimony to the integrity of British leadership in world affairs.

There is nothing in our commonwealth relationship which compels any member to remain within the family against its own wishes. That is precisely as it should be. There is no loyalty so strong as that solidly based on freedom of will. Accordingly, to preserve, to keep intact and to promote further commonwealth growth and understanding should be the endless aim of each and every component member. That, I am confident, is the aim and object of Her Majesty's government of Great Britain. That, I am equally confident, is the aim and object of Her Majesty's government of Canada. In

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our view the commonwealth must be preserved, all of it. None of it is expendable. All of it is well worth while.

I do not wish to suggest for one moment that there cannot be differences of opinion between members of the commonwealth from time to time. Because of the voluntary nature of our association that is only natural. But when differences do occur they are the differences that one normally expects between members of the same family or between friend and friend. Let no one erroneously suppose that these diverse opinions are signs of weakness or of disunity. Quite the contrary. Diversity is in fact one of the main sources of the strength of the commonwealth family. Like the mortar in a brick wall it separates the various units and at the same time binds them securely together. A brick wall without mortar is weak indeed. On more than one occasion in the past the enemies of our sovereign have learned not to underestimate the inherent strength of the commonwealth's invisible ties.

We in Canada are proud of the fact that numerically speaking the greater part of the commonwealth embraces nations in Asia and in Africa which recently have achieved or, speaking of Africa in particular, are about to achieve full and complete self-government. We are happy that these peoples share our common heritage of free institutions and we are anxious to assist them to develop their material resources. We are thankful for the bridgehead of mutual trust and understanding that the commonwealth ties maintain between them and us. We hope they will all remain in the commonwealth. Certainly we in Canada will be the last to forsake our common heritage. Nor do we cling to this common heritage for material gain, but rather for a better understanding amongst all peoples everywhere.

We welcome the recent visit of the Prime Minister of India to our nation's capital. We recall with affection the most cordial reception our own Prime Minister was given when he visited the nations of Asia in 1954. We congratulate the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) on his globe-girdling tour of commonwealth countries. As a result of such visits of good will and understanding, there is growing today a stronger, better commonwealth than we have known before.

I must confess, Mr. Speaker, that I am one of those people who upon occasion have speculated on the possibility of expanding the commonwealth to include freedom loving nations of good will who are not now members. I am happy indeed to recall that from time to time such hopeful speculation has