

been in its present form only one nation which attained independence, namely Burma, did not apply for membership. In other words, these nations representing various colours have of their own volition decided to remain with the institution and become active and effective members.

#### Trade with West Europe

. . . One other matter I want to refer to is the question of trade. Western Europe represents a very important market for all Commonwealth countries. With the exception of the United Kingdom most of them, like Canada, are important suppliers to Western Europe of agricultural products. It was therefore recognized that it would be a matter of much concern if our competitive access to these markets was impaired in any way by the agricultural policies which may be followed by the European Economic Community. The Community can have a tremendous influence in the direction of world trade, and this is significant for the primary producing countries of the Commonwealth. It was urged that both The Six and The Seven should pursue trade policies that are consistent with their obligations under GATT. In this way Western Europe would be contributing to the general economic well-being of the world, and particularly of the under-developed countries.

Some concern was expressed about the possibility that the plans to create a successor organization for the OEEC might lead to exclusive or restrictive arrangements which would not take into account the interests of countries outside Europe. I explained that, while Canada expected to be a full member of the revised organization, we attached great importance to ensuring that its efforts should be directed toward improving multilateral trading conditions and that we did not regard this as in any way an exclusive organization which would be harmful to the interests of other Commonwealth members. I believe the members of the Commonwealth share our concern that the economic division in Western Europe should not lead, or be permitted to lead, to political division. It was also recognized, as I saw it, that the United Kingdom should continue to maintain the closest co-operation with the rest of the Commonwealth in developing its own policies with regard to trade with Western Europe.

. . . To those who have predicted that the Commonwealth was on a slippery slope, I am convinced that it came out of the Conference stronger than ever. It is impossible to convey to the Members of this House the spirit that was apparent in the desire to assure the maintenance of unity without the sacrifice of principle on the part of any of the members. Each of the representatives, in a spirit of understanding, was conscious of and concerned with the welfare of all other members. While re-emphasizing the cardinal principle of the Commonwealth, non-interference in domestic affairs, the multiracial nature and the need for recognition of equality of all races and peoples were recognized. In the informal meetings it was made clear and definite so that no one could misunderstand it.

I mentioned this earlier in another way, and I repeat it. While the Commonwealth has no constitution, the membership and variety in population of the