

nation with little emotional feeling for the British Crown -- wished to remain a Commonwealth member. Canada's contribution was the decision of other prime ministers, in which Mr. St. Laurent and Mr. Pearson played a key part, that an independent Asian republic should be allowed, and indeed encouraged, to remain a member of the Commonwealth when all those involved desired it. Twenty-two years later, a majority of the Commonwealth members are republics (16 out of 31) and at least one other member (Ceylon) has publicly announced its intention to become a republic this year.

Another key stage in Commonwealth evolution was the firm stand taken during the Sixties on the principle of racial equality. First prominent in 1961 at the time of South Africa's withdrawal, the non-racist character of the Commonwealth was explicitly reaffirmed in the communiqué of the 1964 prime ministers' conference and assumes a prominent place in the declaration adopted by the heads of government at the recent meeting in Singapore. Canadian leaders took a leading part on each of these occasions.

Why Commonwealth of Continuing Importance to Canada

In its review of foreign policy, the Government set for itself certain basic national aims. These are described in *Foreign Policy for Canadians* as embracing three essential ideas:

- (1) That Canada will continue secure as an independent political entity;
- (2) that Canada and all Canadians will enjoy enlarging prosperity in the widest possible sense;
- (3) that all Canadians will see in the life they have and the contribution they make to humanity something worth while preserving in identity and purpose.

It seems to me that, in particular, the first and third of these national objectives are directly served through Canada's continued and active participation in the Commonwealth. The movement towards a larger, more cohesive, political-economic community in Western Europe raises the possibility of polarization in other parts of the world, including our own continent. If Canada is to achieve its national objectives, it can best do so in an open world environment. Canada has traditionally looked to links overseas for countervailing forces to offset the attractions of our friendly and powerful southern neighbour. One result, as explained above, was to foster an almost instinctive Canadian tendency to develop and maintain links with friends overseas. Today, ways of thinking developed a century ago still appear relevant to the national goals of maintaining national unity, sovereignty and independence. Friendly contacts and the long tradition of political consultation elaborated within the Commonwealth are still relevant today to the search for peace and security. And, through such institutions as the United Nations, la Francophonie and the Commonwealth, Canadians can contribute both at the level of government and individually to the solution of major international issues such as racial discrimination and race conflict, economic disparities, changing patterns of trade, environmental pollution and population. By so doing, they help in a very direct sense to promote social justice, and to enhance the quality of life, not only for themselves but for less-fortunate peoples elsewhere.