

While I was at The Hague, I met privately with the French Foreign Minister, M. Couve de Murville, as part of our continuing ministerial consultations. We talked not only about NATO matters and Cyprus but about more general international problems and about our developing bilateral programmes in the cultural field. I am sure we will have an opportunity to give an indication of the nature of these bilateral accords which were reached with France and in connection with which I was able to report some progress in my conversations with the French Foreign Minister, who, I believe and I am sure the Prime Minister will agree, is one of the great foreign ministers. Even when we do not agree with his views, they are worth trying to understand, for I am sure they represent much more than a purely national approach to the problems of Europe and the world. I am happy to see that this was confirmed by France herself in the warm reception which the Government of France gave to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a few days ago.

In recent months Franco-Canadian programmes have been set in motion which will result in closer educational and cultural links. Our investment relationships are also actively under study, and we are looking at a number of other fields in which there may be some possibility for mutually beneficial links -- immigration, defence production, science, tourism and so on. Neither we nor the French expect to see spectacular changes overnight, but we are working to create a new atmosphere or a new structure in our relations.

I might add here that we in no way think of this new relationship as one of interest only to French-speaking Canadians. May I quote what the Prime Minister said at our dinner last January in honour of Monsieur Pompidou, the French Prime Minister. I quote the Prime Minister of Canada:

"In English-speaking regions of Canada, there is a much greater interest in the French language and French culture, the role of which is being increasingly appreciated as an essential element in our nation. This development brings about, quite naturally, a renewal of interest which serves most appropriately our relations with France, and this, I can assure you, is not limited to the Province of Quebec...The two governments are fully alive to the opportunities offered by the dynamic progress within the two countries."

The Commonwealth: A Unique Institution

I have spoken of our relations with France. Turning to the Commonwealth, I might say that we look forward with pleasure to the holding of the Third Commonwealth Education Conference here in Ottawa from August 21 to September 4. It will be recalled that, as a result of the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference held in Montreal in 1958, a Commonwealth Education Conference was held in Oxford in July of 1959. This meeting recommended the development of four types of Commonwealth co-operation in education: the scholarship and fellowship plan, the training of teachers, the supply of teachers, and technical education. Developments in all these fields were reviewed and new areas of co-operation examined at a second conference held in New Delhi in January 1962.