

The meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers just concluded has again provided an opportunity for frank discussions at the highest level and a demonstration of the close relationship which distinguishes this unique association of free nations. Canada joined in welcoming four new self-governing members of the Commonwealth—Sierra Leone, Tanganyika, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Commonwealth Conference discussed Britain's negotiations with the European Economic Community and the economic and political implications for the Commonwealth and its members of possible British accession to the Community. Canada has a vital concern in these issues and the government will spare no effort to safeguard the interests of Canada while preserving the unity and strength of the Commonwealth as a whole.

Far-reaching changes are taking place in the trading relationships between nations and groups of nations. New opportunities are opening up for fruitful negotiations to reduce the barriers to trade on a general, non-discriminatory basis. My Government believes and has proposed that these important subjects should receive comprehensive consideration at a conference of representatives of like minded nations.

Canada has continued to play an increasingly effective role in international affairs. The division of Germany and the position of Berlin remain a source of friction despite continuing efforts to find a basis for a negotiated settlement. So long as the Communist powers continue actions that bring tension and distrust, Canada's defensive capability must be maintained both at home and on the frontiers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Europe and in the Atlantic.

The threat of war can be eliminated only by reaching effective international agreement on disarmament verified by means that inspire confidence. Canada will persist in its efforts to achieve this end.

Canadians have noted with satisfaction the establishment by the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization, of a World Food Programme based on a proposal put forward by my Ministers. You will be asked to authorize a Canadian contribution to this programme.

My Government will ask you, as a significant step in rounding out the concept of Confederation, to consider a resolution to provide for the "repatriation" of the Constitution of Canada and to invite the concurrence of the provinces to this end.

As another means of making manifest the Canadian identity, my Government will invite the Provinces to a conference for consultation regarding the choice of a national flag and other national symbols.

Measures will be placed before you to provide for the division of the Northwest Territories into two territories, and to provide more self-government for the residents of that area as a step toward the ultimate creation of new Provinces in Canada's great North.

You will be requested to enact measures to give effect, with modifications, to certain of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Publications.