

*External Affairs*

we must concede that India played a part first of all in the negotiations which led to the armistice, and after all an armistice is better than fighting, and also played a part, I think a significant part, in the dealings with the prisoners of war. We remember how the prisoners of war used to be front-page news almost every morning. There is one menace which apparently has been put to sleep for the moment at any rate.

The commonwealth cuts across regionalisms. Like the C.P.R., it spans the world and helps to break down isolation. You might also say it is neither American, European, Asiatic nor African but world-wide. Its members are set in different continents but they belong outside, too. Australia is not merely a part of the southeast Asiatic region; it is a part of the commonwealth. South Africa is not merely a part of Africa; it is a part of the commonwealth. Canada is not merely an important part of the North American continent; it is a part of the commonwealth. Here I should like to read from one whose words were always listened to with interest, describing briefly the role of our own country, its purposes and its possibilities. I quote briefly from Churchill speaking of Canada's place in the world:

The long unguarded frontier, the habits and intercourse of daily life, the fruitful and profitable connections of business, the sympathies and even the antipathies of honest neighbourliness, make Canada a binder-together of the English-speaking peoples. She is a magnet exercising a double attraction, drawing both Great Britain and the United States towards herself and thus drawing them closer to each other.

She is the only surviving bond which stretches from Europe across the Atlantic ocean. In fact, no state, no country, no band of men can more truly be described as the linchpin of peace and world progress.

Then I come in this list to the United Kingdom, that much-enduring people good at need; often annoying, if you will, but who improve on acquaintance, always good in a pinch, and who have stood for freedom when no one else would do it except the other members in the commonwealth, and at a time when it was vital it should be done.

The commonwealth cannot be isolationist. Geography forbids; it is spread all over the world and its interests tend to world order. At the same time there is a tendency to the decentralization of power and toward local autonomy.

I want to say a word as to the vast importance of the Asian members of the commonwealth. It may well be that the hundreds of millions of Asians within the commonwealth may still bring us a rich harvest of good will, which we can hardly anticipate as yet, for they have contacts with the rest

of the Asian world. I have already mentioned the useful part which India has been playing in world affairs and I want to say again that every member of the commonwealth is a member of their own free will—they can take down their hats and leave any time they wish. I have also pointed out that it helps to mitigate regionalism. Power split three ways is infinitely safer than power split two ways.

Now I wish to say a word as to a division of the world into two blocs and what that would mean to Canada if it were ever consummated. Just as Belgium used to be the cockpit of Europe we stand between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. and we could easily become the cockpit in the centre of a conflict. Without the commonwealth connection there would be little alternative but to become part of the hemispheric empire of the United States. But the commonwealth has always been friendly to the United States and indeed during two world wars helped to pull the United States out of continental isolation.

There was a time when there was a feeling throughout the commonwealth that parts of that commonwealth, other than the United Kingdom, suffered from some inferiority of status, that there was a touch of colonialism. However, Mr. Speaker, I know that we are all aware, and, every one of us, fully convinced, that that status is long behind us, and at the present time we are as free as the air, and free to do what we will. The commonwealth constitutes an example of world order on a small scale because, as I said, it covers the world. It has always stood for freedom and toleration and it has saved the world from what might have been world tyranny in both great wars.

That being so I found some disappointment in the words used by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson). These words have already been quoted but I should like to quote briefly again as reported at page 2394 of *Hansard*. During a statement made at Rollins College, Florida, the minister said:

So we range ourselves on the side of freedom, under the leadership of the United States of America, and we will play, I hope, a good part in the long and unending fight for peace and a decent world.

I regret that at that time the minister should have thought it necessary to confine his remarks to the United States. We are, of course, ready to accept leadership from the United States, but I regret that he left it open to the interpretation that we do not regard the commonwealth as one of the