

The Prime Ministers considered the particular position of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in relation to meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. Taking into account the 20 years' attendance first by the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia and now by the Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, they agreed that they would welcome the continued participation of the Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers.

Apart from the consideration of matters which are of common concern to all Commonwealth countries, these meetings also afford opportunities for discussions outside the formal sessions. Advantage has been taken of these opportunities on this occasion. The continuing exchange of views on matters of common concern is an important element in the relationship between the member countries of the Commonwealth. It is of the utmost value that this should be supplemented at intervals by personal contacts between the political leaders of the Commonwealth countries, and in a rapidly changing world the need for these direct consultations has assumed a new importance.

LONDON,

6th July, 1956.

TEXT OF PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

The statement of the conference—which, as always, represented a lot of work in achieving points of substance and forms of expression to which all could agree—indicates that the main subjects of discussion were in the field of international affairs. Problems of the Commonwealth, as such, did not require very much attention. It is functioning as we expect it to function and adapting itself to changing conditions. It is primarily an association of nations having a common heritage of British parliamentary institutions, and many elements of common purpose in their approach to the problems of the day, despite the great differences in the geography, history and cultures of the various constituent nations.

The purpose for which we meet is the important and constructive one of exchanging information and opinions, in the hope that thereby the governments and parliaments of member countries can and will make wiser decisions. The conference does not seek to take any collective decisions or actions itself, but hopes to assist in bringing points of view closer together.

The Commonwealth of today has not been the product of any political theory. It has developed from the practical response of sensible men to the desire for a continuing and close political relationship which adds to rather than detracts from the independence of its members. For most member countries, a common allegiance to the same Crown is a link between us which we hold very dear. For the other, republican members, the Queen is none the less the Head of the Commonwealth. In discussion around the table, there is no distinction between members, and all Prime Ministers joined in frankly and fully setting their views in confidence before their colleagues, and in questioning one another.