

ST. LAURENT: The sentiment, Mr. Claxton, is admirable and even the accent is good.

FISHER: Well, that seems to clear the matter up, but I noticed that you made mention of your ties to the United Kingdom. Could you, Mr. St. Laurent, tell me what is the nature of your ties to the United Kingdom, other than the ties of friendship and kinship?

ST. LAURENT: Our ties are not to the United Kingdom, Mr. Fisher, but rather with the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom and Canada are on equal footing as members of the British Commonwealth of nations. We share a common sovereign, His Majesty, King George VI.

CLAXTON: And besides the constitutional link -- that George VI is King of Canada as well as King of the United Kingdom -- we share certain common beliefs with the British people. I am sure that Mr. St. Laurent will agree with me in this. We have a common tradition of belief in consultation and compromise as a means of reaching workable solutions to common problems.

ST. LAURENT: I do agree with that point, Mr. Claxton. The belief in free and full discussion is fundamental to an understanding of the Commonwealth relationship. I sometimes think that a strong element in our very satisfactory relationship is our predisposition to talk things over with one another -- though that practice is by no means exclusive to the Commonwealth. For example, very full discussions of problems which concern Canada and the United States are constantly being carried on, at many different levels and in many different ways.

FISHER: Well, where does the Governor General fit into your constitutional picture? We are particularly interested because I understand that the Governor General, Field Marshal Alexander, is coming down to Washington and New York to pay us his first official visit next week.

ST. LAURENT: I mentioned that King George VI is the King of Canada as well as of other parts of the British Commonwealth. Since he obviously cannot reside in Canada at all times, the Governor General acts as the King's personal representative. He is appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of Canada.

FISHER: In other words, he is not a link between the British and Canadian Governments, but rather between the Canadian Government and the King.

ST. LAURENT: Exactly. The British Government is represented in Canada, as we are in the United Kingdom by a High Commissioner. These men have much the same status as an ambassador and perform essentially the same functions. Now the other important constitutional link

FISHER: Besides the King?

ST. LAURENT: ... besides the King ... is the fact that the constitution of Canada is an act passed in 1867 by the Parliament of Great Britain. This means that it is necessary for every proposed change in the Canadian constitution to come before the British Parliament and be passed by it as an amendment to the original act.

FISHER: That seems rather a curious way to amend your constitution, if I may be forgiven for saying so, Mr. St. Laurent.

ST. LAURENT: I agree with you. It is curious. But it has been retained hitherto at the request of Canada because we have not yet been able to agree amongst ourselves on some other way to substitute for it. We want to be sure that minority rights will be fully respected and it is