

replaced by some unforeseen revolutionary surge of events which will sweep them out of office and out of influence. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that the ties between us as individuals and them as individuals which have survived the change in the status of those countries, and which indeed have often been strengthened by that change, should be nurtured and developed.

There is no easy formula for accomplishing this end. If it is possible to bring it about, it will be done in many ways - exchange of students, exchanges of people in professional life and businessmen, as free as possible movement of people back and forth; and it will be accomplished in an even more important way by demonstrating to the people of the new democracies of the Far East that they can secure from this part of the world the technical and economic assistance which they need without the political strings which they learned to abhor in the 19th Century and which have their current reincarnation in a truly destructive and reactionary form in the new imperialism of the Communist empire. In this process, it seems to me that the Commonwealth may be of the greatest importance. There are already in existence all kinds of personal ties of one kind and another which arise out of the Commonwealth association. Sometimes they are ties which arise simply out of common membership in an ancient university or common service on some administrative committee which existed under the old system before the war. There are also methods of procedure which are familiar to people who have worked within the Commonwealth that sometimes make it easier for them to understand one another. And finally, there is the enormously important fact that the constitutional system in all parts of the Commonwealth is approximately the same. By that I mean that the Commonwealth countries adopt the parliamentary system of government, rather than the presidential system. I do not need to explain to this audience the difference between your system of government and ours and the significance of that difference. I am not sure, however, that people in this country always realize how important that difference is and how much it may affect the political thinking and the behaviour of a Minister or alternatively of a Civil Servant when he is on mission for his country. In our efforts to maintain and improve our relationship with the East, I think it is very important that we should keep constantly in mind that in most of the new democracies of the East the system of government is that which is practised throughout the Commonwealth.

Finally, I think we should remember that there have been a number of occasions on which the Commonwealth has demonstrated its ability to take immediate, practical steps in regard to specific situations. I refer only to two of them. One is the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan during the last war. After the fall of France, it became immediately apparent that tremendously expanded air forces would be necessary for the defence of the Western World and that these forces would have to be trained and equipped in areas that were on the one hand beyond the range of German bombers, and on the other hand reasonably accessible to the scene of battle. At this time the Commonwealth alone was engaged in war against Nazi Germany. It was, therefore, decided quickly and with a minimum of red tape to centre in Canada the arrangements for the training of Commonwealth air forces. Airmen came from all over the Commonwealth and were trained on air fields in Canada and were then sent to join their particular units in whatever theatre these units were engaged. I am not concerned at the moment to evaluate the contribution which the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan made to the winning of the war. I cite it now simply as an example of the way in which, even in the absence of elaborate central machinery, the Commonwealth is able when the occasion demands, to act quickly on a specific commitment. The other example to which I wish to refer is the action recently taken by the Commonwealth concerning the economic development of Southeast Asia. This was a plan suggested, principally by the Australian Delegation, at the meeting of Commonwealth countries in Ceylon during January last. It was decided then to give the matter more detailed consideration at a later conference, and during May there was a further meeting of the Commonwealth countries in Sydney at which a decision was reached. In the final set of resolutions of that conference it was recommended that a report should be prepared setting out the need for development, the development programmes of the countries in the area which might be expected to be completed over a period of six years ending June 30, 1957, and the need for external assistance in order to