

Commonwealth is a global association which must be seriously taken into account in any calculation of the forces and resources of the free world.

The countries of the Commonwealth - like the graduates of this University - are made up of the new and the old. The new members are, of course, the three Asian countries - India, Pakistan and Ceylon - which gained their independence in 1947 and 1948. The older members - but newer peoples, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada, won their national status much earlier. They acquired it surely but gradually. Somehow they found it unnecessary to have an all-out revolution to achieve national freedom. They certainly had troubles - rebellions, passive resistance, and conflict - but they did not need a war of independence. So, in the case of Canada, instead of Bunker Hill and the Declaration of Independence, we had such things as a Durham Report - rather dull reading - and the Statute of Westminster - much duller. Instead of generals on horseback leading the tattered but immortal militia to victory over the Red Coats, we had politicians in silk hats securing concessions from the home government in London. The symbols of our nationhood may be less stirring than yours but the reality behind them is the same.

There are many reasons why political change in these particular Commonwealth countries has been gradual. In Canada, for instance, love of liberty, which burned as brightly as anywhere else, was tempered by attachment to a Crown which had learned the lesson of George III's pretensions and failures. We also kept our faith in constitutional processes and the feeling became strong that we could have national independence and Commonwealth association - the best of both worlds at a time when it was becoming clear that independence was not enough for security.

Our acceptance of the Crown as a symbol of this association was based on more than sentiment or on loyalty of the heart. There was this, certainly, particularly among those whose personal histories were not far removed from the British Isles; but there was a great deal more. There was also a conviction that the Crown had a unifying and stabilizing value in our national growth. For countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada, the Crown stood not for tyranny but for the British system of parliamentary government, painfully and slowly wrought since the days of Magna Carta. We desired to preserve this for our own use and adapt it to fit our own needs. It represented the continuity of our history and gave depth and solidity to our development. Today we feel in Canada that the Crown - in the person of our gracious and lovely Queen - lends order and dignity to our national life, standing, as it does, above the play of party controversies. We think it is good to be able to honour the head of state - and berate the head of government - at one and the same time. You, whose distant political origins were identical with ours, have created your own system of popular government which has exerted such a profound influence on the development of democratic institutions throughout the world. But the Commonwealth countries, while differing - with one exception - more closely to the older forms, have achieved an independence and a distinct character no less real and complete than yours; a fact which I find is sometimes not understood in the United States.