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WEEK'S EVENTS IN REVIEW

PRIME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE: "While the superiority of the Western world in nuclear weapons is now probably our most important single deterrent against war, nevertheless, we recognize that this is a wasting asset and that peace must ultimately rest on a better and more lasting foundation," said the Prime Minister, Mr. L.S. St. Laurent, in a statement in the House of Commons on February 14 on the Conference of British Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London, from which he and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, had just returned.

After stating that the meeting "was not called to make decisions on any question," but was intended to be "an opportunity for a full and frank exchange of views about the many events of great importance in the international field. . . and of course any other matters of common concern which might be raised," Mr. St. Laurent proceeded:

"Though this was not an economic conference, we did have a useful and encouraging exchange of information and views about the development of Commonwealth trade and of world trade. This is summed up in a paragraph of the communique: We all reaffirmed our adherence to a principle - which is the very foundation of Canadian economic policy - that is to say: 'the progressive approach to the widest practicable system of trade and payments,' as the best way of serving our individual and the general interest. We also had very serious discussions of the problems of nuclear energy, and listened

to a most impressive, indeed an unforgettable, statement of Sir Winston Churchill as he painted for us, in majestic and memorable words, the significance of man's discoveries in this field which could mean his total destruction or the unfolding of a future for him beyond our present dreams.

"While the superiority of the western world in nuclear weapons is now probably our most important single deterrent against war, nevertheless, we recognize that this is a wasting asset and that peace must ultimately rest on a better and more lasting foundation. But one thing is sure and we had impressive evidence before us to prove it: a nuclear war would mean global ruin.

"Against this grim conclusion, we contemplated the happier possibility of hope for peace arising out of the very destructive power of the weapons now available. This may, as Sir Winston put it, result in the destruction of war, rather than the destruction of humanity. It is then for us all, as the communique puts it, 'a choice and a challenge.'

"Defence questions generally were discussed in plenary sessions, during which the various Prime Ministers spoke of their own countries' problems in this field and how they were being met. There were also limited meetings on area defence problems, attended by those members of the Conference which had accepted special peacetime commitments in those areas. International tensions, however, and the search for peace and security, dominated our discussions.