

adaptability that is required . . ."

Still, the post-war change necessitated profound adjustments. Some saw the Commonwealth as simply the Empire in a new suit of clothes, but this was an illusion. As early as 1964 an anonymous writer signing himself "A Conservative" was asking in *The Times* of London, "Is the Commonwealth a Gigantic Farce?" "Not merely the non-European members . . . but the so-called 'old Dominions' have no present real ties with Britain other than such as history might have left between any two foreign nations."

Bruce Hutchison, writing in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, saw the Commonwealth as having indeed few ties to the past and ". . . no future except as an entirely new concept without any parallel in history." He added a phrase which describes the Commonwealth as well today as in 1964: "The structure is amorphous, delicate and constantly changing."

When the Commonwealth's Prime Ministers met in July of that year, they made some vital adjustments. First, they established a Commonwealth Secretariat which was to be "at the service of all Commonwealth governments and as a visible symbol of the spirit of cooperation which animates the Commonwealth."

Arnold Cantwell Smith, an Assistant Under-Secretary of State in Canada's Department of External Affairs, became the first Secretary-General. Mr. Smith, a former Rhodes Scholar,

had been the Canadian Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1961 to 1963. (His tenure was renewed in 1970 for another five years.)

In June of 1965, the Prime Ministers met at Marlborough House in London and among the prime topics for consideration was the question of the newly founded Secretariat: should it be strong or weak? The question would be hotly debated for some years. And, as Hutchison had suggested, the new organization was "constantly changing." South Africa, which through Field Marshal Smuts had originated the concept, was expelled in 1961, and Ireland, which had in its treaty with Britain given it legality, had withdrawn in 1948. India and Pakistan, two members, had engaged in a war, and Pakistan would also leave in time. But Mr. Smith and the Secretariat and the members collectively and apart were emerging as something more than a postal system for the polite exchange of views. The Commonwealth members were by no means always polite, and they had strong views on difficult issues. Pearson, for one, felt this was absolutely necessary: "It can be said and categorically that if the Commonwealth does not reject racism in any form and wherever it shows itself; if any of its members base their policies on such discrimination, then the Commonwealth is not going to survive."

The Commonwealth did survive the troubled
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Prime Minister Trudeau's Statement On Commonwealth Day, 1973

"The technology of the seventies permits Canadians to be neighbours of persons in every other country in the world. We can travel from one point in the globe to any other in a matter of hours. We can communicate over those same distances in a matter of minutes or micro-seconds. Yet with all this speed, with all this knowledge, we find that the pace of life gives us too little opportunity to know well other persons whether they live near us or far away. Those few associations which provide this opportunity should be preserved and nurtured, for they represent in real measure the balance wheel of human society. One of those associations, in my view, one of the most effective, is the Commonwealth. Largely by accident of

history, 860,000,000 people in the world living on every continent and in every major ocean, speak the same language, share many of the same values, understand the same idiom and treasure alike the advantages of informality. We should not underestimate the many immense benefits which flow from talking frankly to one another, understanding better one another, eliminating areas of prejudice and irritation, helping one another. These things the Commonwealth permits us to do as between governments, as between professional bodies and as between individuals. I salute the Commonwealth and welcome the Heads of Government of 32 independent nations to Ottawa this August."