

to the interests of other Commonwealth members. I believe the members of the Commonwealth share our concern that the economic division in Western Europe should not lead or be permitted to lead to political division. It was also recognized, as I saw it, that the United Kingdom should continue to maintain the closest co-operation with the rest of the Commonwealth in developing its own policies with regard to trade with Western Europe.

Now ... to those who have predicted that the Commonwealth was on a slippery slope, I am convinced that it came out of the Conference stronger than ever. It is impossible to convey to the Members of this House the spirit that was apparent in the desire to assure the maintenance of unity without the sacrifice of principle on the part of any of the members. Each of the representatives, in a spirit of understanding, was conscious of and concerned with the welfare of all other members. While re-emphasizing the cardinal principle of the Commonwealth, non-interference in domestic affairs, the multiracial nature and the need for recognition of equality of all races and peoples were recognized. In the informal meetings it was made clear and definite so that no one could misunderstand it.

I mentioned this earlier in another way, and I repeat it. While the Commonwealth has no constitution, the membership and variety in population of the peoples that compose its membership demand the recognition of equality, and I believe the final communiqué made it clear that the recognition of these principles has been achieved in spirit.

As I return I am convinced of one thing. While there were those who were critical of the stand which was being taken, I think, in the light of what has occurred, the course followed was one that has assured the maintenance of the basic principles, and also made possible in the future the achievement of equality and the denial of discrimination. The ominous danger of Commonwealth fission was prevented without the sacrifice of any vital principles by the Prime Ministers and representatives of the various countries. The course of reason, restraint and diplomacy was followed rather than that of judicial action. The various Prime Ministers who felt most strongly against fanatical racialism maintained a self-control and a dignity in the presentation of their arguments which had its effect. I think it may be fairly said that an advance was made in the interracial and multi-racial relationships of the many peoples of the Commonwealth; and while collective action was asked by some before we met, it was asked by none by the time we separated.