

Of course, in Australia and in New Zealand one felt that one was within, as it were, the family circle even though in respect to some matters of recent origin there have been honest differences of view. The position of Australia in this particular is well known. I had the opportunity of discussing these matters with Mr. Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia, and his foreign minister and, indeed, on one memorable afternoon with all the members of his government. Mr. Menzies said of Canada that notwithstanding what may in particular instances be differences in point of view, one thing that the world could know of Canada was that it spoke as a member of the Commonwealth in the light of what it understood to be its obligations based on no consideration but the good of the Commonwealth and the good of all nations throughout the world.

In Ceylon, in India and in Pakistan, notwithstanding the fact that recent events have, understandably, caused a strain on certain relations I found that the situation there now -- based upon my conversations with the three leaders, namely the Prime Minister of Ceylon, Mr. Bandaranaike, Mr. Nehru in India and Prime Minister Suhrawardy in Pakistan -- is that there is on their part a recognition of the value of the Commonwealth not only as a sensible grouping of nations in this inter-dependent world but as an instrument which can and is being used to interpret Western opinion in many sectors of Asia. I believe that is an important fact to state and to remember. There may be dissident voices in some of these countries but my judgment would be that, for the most part, those who at the present time have to do with the conduct of government in those great countries recognize that in the consultations of prime ministers, in the consultations of Commonwealth foreign ministers and in the collaboration that takes place in the United Nations, the Commonwealth serves as a valuable instrument in a world that needs to move closer and closer together rather than diverge on an increasing scale.

I took occasion not only to discuss matters in accordance with the mandate given by my colleagues with those responsible for the conduct of government but to visit the people as well. I took occasion to go into their villages. Anyone who knows anything about the complex character of that great Asian state of India will understand what the village means to that country with its 360 millions of people, 80 per cent of whom live in the villages of which there are some half million which have the form, the character and the quality of centuries-old construction. I sought by going amongst the people to indicate, by manner and conduct, that it was the desire of the people of Canada that we should be friends with them, and as well with other nations in Asia, as indeed is the case with other countries in the world who are willing to accept our friendship.

There are some on this continent, and I suspect the same is true in other parts of the world, who possibly misunderstand on occasion a country like India; who sometimes feel that possibly India is disposed, because of its policy of neutralism, to give greater support to those who do not agree with the basic concepts of the free nations of the world. I should like to say this at once. There is a great undercurrent of spiritual conviction in India, as there is in the case of most of the countries I visited. The religion of Buddha, the Hindu religion, the Moslem religion, the Christian religion, together with the natural instinct so many Asians have for a philosophical bent, in my opinion all these things make these countries an impregnable fortress against the possible encroachment of totalitarian ideals of programs.