

*Commonwealth Conference*

Sir, what happened in 1960 and 1961 was this, and I summarized it in a report I gave to the house on March 17, 1961:

We have declared that non-discrimination on the basis of race and colour is the foundation stone of a multiracial association composed of representatives from all parts of the world. No foundation could be broader or more solidly based than the fundamental principle which, though unwritten, has emerged from this meeting.

Everywhere throughout the world among coloured peoples Canada's stand taken then, and again by the Prime Minister in the recent conference, represents the viewpoint of Canadians. If we as a country had made no other contribution to the commonwealth than this, I believe in that contribution we have made possible what the Prime Minister said in his concluding words, namely an ever strengthening commonwealth and an ever strengthening commonwealth relation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Now, sir, I am going to deal with one or two other matters to which the Prime Minister made reference. He dealt with the question of Rhodesia. I recall so well that in 1961 there was criticism of the stand taken by Canada at the commonwealth prime ministers' conference in relation to South Africa. It was said in this house that there should not be intervention in the affairs of any nation. At that time, speaking as leader of the opposition, the right hon. Prime Minister said this:

But let us not deceive ourselves. The implications of the procedure that has been followed and of the results that have flowed from it at this conference are very important and very far reaching.

Then he went on to say that a position had been taken far beyond non-intervention in the affairs of another nation. Those are the changing things that take place. What was regarded as extremism when we took the stand respecting the maintenance in every part of the commonwealth, including South Africa, of non-discrimination is today regarded as orthodoxy and was respected and approved by the prime ministers at the recent conference. So we go, following this course; and what in the past was regarded as unorthodox becomes, in the light of experience, accepted doctrine.

In so far as Southern Rhodesia is concerned, I wonder whether it might not have been more beneficial to the conference and to the solution of this problem if the prime minister of Southern Rhodesia had been present at the conference in much the same

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

position that was occupied by Sir Roy Welensky, who of course had greater authority and a larger area of responsibility. I say—and this derives from a remark made by the Prime Minister—that if we want to get solutions in regard to difficult matters, the way is to confront one another. In other words he has said, in reference to communist China and its admission to the United Nations, that the view expressed by several of those present at that conference was that if communist China was in the United Nations she could be faced directly respecting those matters that would be subject to criticism. We always have a higher capacity of understanding in looking back, but I do feel it would have been better, using the analogy placed before the house by the Prime Minister, if Southern Rhodesia had been present.

It is very interesting to read that part of the communiqué. It indicates that the British government asked for insertion in the communiqué of its expressed views. I am one who doubts whether, no matter how beneficial it might be in the present case of Southern Rhodesia, the nations of the commonwealth should intervene in matters peculiar and of domestic interest only to a particular country, whether a member of the commonwealth or a colonial possession of one of the members of the commonwealth. I realize the frightful potentialities of what has taken place in Southern Rhodesia, but I wonder—and I am expressing this as a question—will not the prime ministers' conference tend to weaken itself, to destroy its effectiveness, if it acts in respect of domestic matters?

Immediately someone will say, "You did not take that view as to South Africa". That was not a domestic matter, sir. That was a matter that affected peoples everywhere in the world. Apartheid was a denial of the principles of brotherhood that are essential to world peace. Does the situation in Southern Rhodesia compare in any way with what took place in South Africa? I think not; but I hope that the words of admonition and the suggestion by the prime ministers will be given full and sympathetic consideration by the prime minister of Southern Rhodesia.

I remember so well when we were discussing South Africa saying to the foreign minister of that country, in effect, "We are not trying to interfere with you, but you have 12 million blacks and 2½ million whites. Give them some representation in the parliament of your country". There used to be three representatives in the days of Smuts and Botha, and I said "Give them that representation".