

Ladies and Gentlemen let me now turn to another facet of the Commonwealth more particularly how we in Canada see it.

It has been our conviction that membership in the Commonwealth enables Canada to draw on a tremendous reserve of knowledge and experience gathered by others but freely accessible to us - accessible because of common traditions, attitudes and institutions. Certainly we consider that membership in the Commonwealth complements our activities in other world bodies and is a useful antidote against elements that sometimes cause countries to focus their attention on purely regional or continental questions. We have, partly thanks to the Commonwealth, the habit of considering problems in wider terms.

When he returned from the Singapore meeting of Heads of Government in 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau told our House of Commons that it was his view that Canada could get along without the Commonwealth but that we could not get along nearly so well, that no problems would be solved by the break-up of the Commonwealth, that no member would find it easier to advance its own interests in its absence. The Declaration that was produced at that meeting and the principles expressed in the Declaration were milestones in the development of the Commonwealth and we have come a long way since then. When one examines that Declaration and the steps that have been taken within the framework of the Commonwealth to fulfil its terms there is some cause for self-congratulation although there is no reason for complacency. As we have seen over the years, the Commonwealth provides a constructive example of a multi-national approach so vital to peace and progress today. We talk together, we consult one another, we co-operate with one another, we exchange knowledge and views on a wide range of