



CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION • DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS • OTTAWA, CANADA

Vol. 16 No. 18

May 3, 1961

CONTENTS

The Idea of the Commonwealth	1	Japanese Economic Mission.....	4
Canada at Seattle Exhibit	2	Engineering and Science Jobs.....	4
War on U-Boats Commemorated	3	Canadian Rocket Programme	5
Emergency Government Sites.....	3	Seaway Annual Report.....	5
Canadian Envoy to Cyprus.....	3	New Residential Construction	6
Electronic Computers	3	Envoys to Paraguay, Bolivia	6
Canada on Social Commission.....	4		

THE IDEA OF THE COMMONWEALTH

In an address to the St. George's Society in Toronto on April 21, Prime Minister Diefenbaker described the idea of the Commonwealth as the finest achievement of "the genius of British political institutions":

"...The Commonwealth comprises nations which have been raised in the English family, and have emerged as free and independent states desiring to retain a voluntary political association with one another and with the Mother Country. This association serves to identify them with others who share these origins and the institutions springing from these origins.

"There is something which Canadians should not forget -- the part which Canada has played in building the Commonwealth. We were pioneers. We worked for nationhood but without aggressive nationalism and without insisting on a rupture of our connections with the Crown.

PROPHETIC VISION

"Sir John A. Macdonald was the first, if not the chief architect of the Commonwealth we know today, and on April 19, 1851, in the Assembly of Upper Canada, he gave his prophetic vision of the Commonwealth to be:

'We are fast ceasing to be a dependency and are assuming the position of an ally of Great Britain. There will thus be formed an immense Confederacy of Free Men, the greatest Confederacy of civilized and intelligent men that has ever had an existence on the face of the globe.'

"The fact that a new and daring conception of this kind could emerge in Canada at that time is proof that freedom is its greatest contribution to the advancement of mankind. Of all the empires of history the British Empire can be said to have been unique in that it was the first to be dissolved by the expressed will of the people of the administering nation. When completed, this historic achievement, which is still in progress, will be a greater one than was the creation by a nation of shopkeepers of the greatest nation that the world has ever seen.

"Too few there are who realize that in 1776, after Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill, one of the greatest Americans of English origin, Benjamin Franklin, placed before the throne in London the Olive Branch Petition which in its content was almost identical with the Statute of Westminster which 155 years later was adopted as a foundation of the Commonwealth.

"There has been a tremendous transition since 1914. Today 90 per cent of the people of the Commonwealth and Empire have their independence, as compared with 10 per cent then.

TIME OF CHANGE

"The Commonwealth entered the Second World War with the same five members which it had during the First World War, having established clearly, however, during that interval, the independence and equality of all its members. The independence of India and Pakistan after World War II made for new conceptions in the development of the Commonwealth.