

# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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## THE EXPANDING COMMONWEALTH

A speech to the House of Commons on May 16, 1960, by Prime Minister Diefenbaker.

... I came back from the London Conference feeling that, bearing in mind the difficult circumstances arising from the situation in South Africa, the Conference was generally useful and successful.

Many observers have, of course, pointed out that the proceedings of the meetings did not result in any perceptible change in the attitude of the South African Government. It was not to be expected, however, that magic improvements could take place in a situation of such tension and complexity. I believe that those who in future will examine and judge this period in Commonwealth history will decide that this meeting did not fail to respond to the stern test to which it was put.

I would be the last to say that everything was achieved that I would have desired. I do not contend that in so far as the communiqué is concerned it can convey the full nature and substance of the deliberations that took place. On occasions in the past I have heard my predecessors ... report on conferences they had attended. In every case it was made perfectly clear that while no decisions were made or can be made in these informal circumstances, there is a oneness of mind that comes about through the exchange of ideas.

There was no disposition on the part of any of the representatives to evade this issue, and there was no lack of frankness in private and informal discussions. I underline the fact that ... only in unanimity can there be a final communiqué issued. Everything that is included therein represents the agreement of all. To bring together the representatives to one quarter of the world's population, belonging to many races and being of many colours, I think it is quite an unusual result that several conclusions were arrived at unanimously which cannot but result in the possibility of change along the lines generally desired.