

elaborate on the reasons for Canada's whole-hearted attachment to that unique association which is the Commonwealth of Nations. Spanning five continents, linking with common bonds peoples of different races and creeds, the Commonwealth is not only the first, but, to date, the only example of a real family of nations. As such it is a major factor in international stability and peace. Like all families we have had our differences, like all human associations, ours is not a perfect one; but, by and large, our aims have been common, and, where they diverged, we have brought our differences to the conference table and discussed them as members of a family.

Our attachment to the Commonwealth, however, would be nothing but empty sentimentality if it did not find expression in a determination to preserve the strength and vigour of the Commonwealth that it may play its ever-increasing and beneficent role in international affairs. It is this concern which, in common with the other Commonwealth countries, we expressed to the United Kingdom in our discussions with them. We urged the United Kingdom to safeguard her important trade and economic links with Commonwealth countries because we fully recognize that the United Kingdom is the pivot of the Commonwealth and that the Commonwealth would be seriously weakened unless the United Kingdom remained in a position to play a full and active part.

Protecting Commonwealth Interests

The British have made it clear to us that, in their negotiations with the European Economic Community, they are determined to safeguard Commonwealth interests. Indeed, they have assured us and the other members of the Commonwealth that, unless they can secure terms which will adequately safeguard the essential interests of Commonwealth countries, they will not join the Common Market. We do not doubt and we have never for one moment doubted the determination of the United Kingdom to endeavour to obtain the necessary safeguards.

We must recognize that, even at best, Canada and other Commonwealth countries would have to face some trade adjustments should the United Kingdom join the Common Market. In the new pattern of international trading relationships which is likely to emerge, losses in one direction will have to be offset by gains in another if we are to succeed in expanding international trade and in raising living standards throughout the world. The changing international economic scene may well compel adjustments in Canada's own commercial policies as well as in the policies of the other important trading countries. In recognition of this possibility, we have been hard at work exploring all possible ways of furthering the vital trade interests of this country.

Some Canadians have suggested that a solution for Canada might be found in joining or associating ourselves with the European Economic Community. Let us examine this suggestion.