

The Commonwealth: A forum where free men try to find ways to progress.

As the late Lester Pearson phrased it: "In my own lifetime we have moved from the Empire without sunset—which God had made mighty and was implored to make mightier yet . . . we have moved from that Empire to today's Commonwealth of Nations."

The changes have been both specific and elusive. The principle of self-government for the colonies had been approved and implemented in Canada as early as 1849. The colonial conferences of the late 19th century and the early 20th set the tone for future association. The men at those meetings represented autonomous self-governing units; discussions were consultative, meetings informal and private and decisions by consensus. A common allegiance to the Crown was the hall-

mark. After World War II, the new Commonwealth emerged as "independent" states, some of which were monarchies, some republics, and there was even one which had an elected King. One vital link was maintained—the Prime Ministers, meeting in 1949, agreed that the British Monarch would be Head of the Commonwealth and the symbol of the free association.

The new Commonwealth was vaguer in form and intent than its predecessor, and this vagueness caused some to dismiss it almost before it began; but Pearson saw its lack of rigidity as a strength, not a weakness. "This association of free states is going through difficult times," he said. "But no international arrangement or system offers a more hopeful example of the kind of flexibility and

The Queen and Canada

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and The Duke of Edinburgh will be the guests of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in Ottawa from July 31 to August 4.

She is the titular head of the Commonwealth of Nations, but her relationships to its individual member states are varied and subtle. While all member nations are totally independent, Her Majesty is Head of State of Britain and Canada and of several other Commonwealth nations. For them she signs legislation into law, though she has no responsibility for the draft and content of the legislation. All Commonwealth countries whether self-governing or dependent accept her as the symbol of their special fraternity.

While in Ottawa, she will have interviews with those heads of government who request them, and she will entertain all the national

leaders at a state dinner on August 2 at the residence of the Governor General.

The Queen summed up her sentiments in a recent message to the peoples of the Commonwealth: "In this unique organization we are fortunate in having endless opportunities for cooperation. Through its informal structure we have created a web of relationships between peoples of many races and creeds and now between a great number of sovereign independent states . . . Britain . . . (has joined) her neighbours in the European community and you may well ask how this will affect the Commonwealth. The new links with Europe will not replace those with the Commonwealth. They cannot alter our historical and personal attachments with kinsmen and friends overseas. Old friends will not be lost."