

Indian and Canadian views of the Commonwealth have many similarities. For many years Canada played a leading part in the development of the sort of Commonwealth into which the new India was able to fit without the slightest infringement of its independence. My predecessor, the late Mr. Mackenzie King, had a great deal to do with this development. He also exerted a helpful influence in the 1948 discussions which prepared the way for India, when it decided to become a republic, to choose also to remain within the Commonwealth. I personally warmly welcomed India's desire to remain associated with us, and I remember that, as Secretary of State for External Affairs, I had an opportunity of expressing this view to your Prime Minister in the correspondence which we exchanged at that time.

In that historic 1947-48 period we saw in the desire of the peoples of India, Pakistan and Ceylon to retain their association with us in the Commonwealth, the signs of a new and promising era both in Commonwealth relations and in the relations between Asia and the West, and we welcomed them without hesitation or reservation.

The Commonwealth is an association of people of many races and colours and creeds, working together on a basis of mutual respect and complete equality of status and the world today needs the wisdom of many peoples. The Commonwealth does perform, I think, a very useful service in enabling its Western members to keep closely in touch with three great Asian nations. This can do a great deal to help the West to understand the views and aspirations of the East. In turn, we are able to explain our point of view to you.

Commonwealth countries have formed the habit of explaining their points of view to one another quietly and frankly. They are accustomed to listening carefully and thoughtfully to what the others have to say, and of getting a great many important things done in an informal but effective manner. These are qualities out of which true international co-operation can grow and which applied to world affairs by all nations will assist the United Nations to carry out the tasks and achieve the purposes which the founders of the organization had in mind.

In speaking to you this afternoon, I may perhaps be expected to say something about the Canadian point of view on certain questions which are of importance to both our countries. I will venture to do so, but since this is not the occasion for a close examination of particular issues, I shall speak in very general terms.

I think we shall discover that, although the Canadian approach to certain questions is somewhat different from yours, we are good companions in the broad endeavour to find realistic solutions to world problems.

Out of this troubled period has been born a new concept of international co-operation -- the concept that countries which are more highly developed materially should co-operate with those which, while the history of their civilization and culture reaches back into a far more distant past are less advanced in their techniques for improving the economic conditions of their people. Canada was among the first to subscribe to this concept, and it has become one of the basic guiding principles of Canadian policy.