

Our Membership in the Commonwealth

Canada, of course, continues to play her full part in the Commonwealth of Nations. It is an association for which we have a deep sentimental attachment reinforced by the comradeship and common sacrifices made in two world wars. I, for one, never for a moment discount the value, in international affairs, of the very special fraternal quality that sets Commonwealth relations apart from the relationships with "foreign" countries, however close and friendly the ties with any such country may be.

But, of course, there is far more to this unique fraternity than mere sentiment. The Commonwealth is an entirely new conception, embracing the belief that sovereignty, limited by a voluntary association with other sovereignties for the preservation of common values, is an acceptable and civilized political order. It is, moreover, a dynamic conception, with members being constantly admitted as they emerge from colonial to independent status. In 1957 we welcomed into the Commonwealth the Federation of Malaya. This year will see Nigeria take her place in our family of nations, and in a few weeks Canada will be opening a diplomatic post in the capital, Lagos.

Shortly thereafter our island neighbours in the Caribbean--the West Indies Federation--will be joining the club, and it has been one of Canada's policies to extend substantial aid and assistance to his potential full Commonwealth member.

The fact that these new nations are voluntarily joining the Commonwealth graphically illustrates the kind of multi-racial community which is developing, bound together by common ideals and institutions, and exercising a profound influence for good throughout the world. I believe the Commonwealth offers a lesson for the world in that it points the way towards the only tolerable solution of the basic dilemma of our time--the problem of achieving order with freedom.

There are lessons, too, for others in the way in which there is mutual assistance within the Commonwealth for improving the lot of the less-developed members. The greater part of Canadian assistance has been carried out under the Colombo Plan, to which we have last year raised our contribution to \$50 million. The full title of this plan is "The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia", and the word "co-operative" has been consistently stressed in the 10 years of the Plan's operation. Working together there has been established a very fine relationship among the member countries of the Plan and the Plan lives up to its title.