

Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting

Annex to Minutes of October 21st, 1948

Discussions during the meeting have demonstrated the value to Commonwealth Governments of consultation with one another on foreign and economic affairs, defence and other matters of common concern. Although the exchange of information is fuller at the present time than it has ever been, it is specially important that consultation should take place early while policy is still in the formative stages. The meeting recommend, subject to endorsement by the respective Governments, the following arrangements for Commonwealth consultation, which in part reflect existing practice:-

1. Meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers will be held as often as is practicable.
2. In the intervals between those meetings Commonwealth meetings on foreign affairs will be held at the Ministerial level at least once a year and twice a year if possible. These meetings will normally be held in one or other of the Commonwealth countries. The first of these meetings will be held in Ceylon.
3. Greater use will be made of facilities in London for consultation and the exchange of information. In addition to their contacts with the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and his staff -

(i) Commonwealth High Commissioners in London have direct access to the Foreign Secretary. Meetings between the Foreign Secretary and individual High Commissioners will be held more frequently. Meetings between the Foreign Secretary and two or more High Commissioners will also be arranged from time to time, as occasion requires, for the discussion of matters of common interest.

(ii) Political Secretaries (or comparable officials) attached to the staffs of Commonwealth High Commissioners in London also have direct access to the Foreign Office. Meetings between them and officials of the Foreign Office, either individually or in groups, will be arranged as required.

Other Commonwealth Governments will endeavour to make comparable arrangements in their capitals.

4. (a) Commonwealth meetings on economic and financial questions of common concern will be held at the Ministerial level when required and practicable. These meetings will normally be held in one or other of the Commonwealth countries, according to circumstances. Where a particular problem directly concerns only some of the Commonwealth countries, the meeting might be confined to representatives of those countries.

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