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BELONGING TOGETHER

By Viscount Kemsley.

The announcement that a Commonwealth Conference is to be called as soon as possible to consider the grave international problems that face us is the best of news. Many of us have felt that much of the strength of the British Commonwealth, so wonderfully proved during the war, so grimly cemented by the sacrifices of its peoples, has since been dissipated by failure in practice to observe the lesson that power beyond the capacity of any member is inherent in the unity of the whole.

There is another general lesson from the example of the Commonwealth in its mutual affairs: the lesson that solutions to the most stubborn problems can often be found by a common-sense, practical approach, when only bitterness and frustration can result from an approach in terms of prestige or pre-conceived attitudes or ideologies. Commonwealth unity itself is founded on an essentially practical basis: we have the sense of belonging together - the underlying condition of acting together - because we have the same long-term interests and because history has taught us that we can serve them best by keeping together.

We in Britain are fully aware of the difficulties which have stood in the way of closer Commonwealth unity in terms of political forms of institutions, and which have a special force for some of the Dominions, including the newer ones - internal divisions, regional interests, harsh immediate problems which like our own seem to demand priority, a right and natural insistence on the full exercise of national independence. But the more that these and other reasons diminish the formal political bonds of the Commonwealth unity, the greater the importance of the unseen, informal bonds which gain their strength from the feelings of ordinary people in all the countries under the Crown. It is the spirit of our peoples which enables the politicians to seize the opportunities of Commonwealth solidarity through whatever means of consultation and agreed action may be available. The success of the Commonwealth Conference is assured if, and only if, the people insist that it should succeed.

EMPIRE-MINDEDNESS

The Commonwealth owes much to the leadership of its greatest statesmen - men like General Smuts, who of all men living can be counted the chief architect of the modern Commonwealth of free and equal nations. But it owes just as much to the spirit of the ordinary man and woman - the spirit that inspires those wonderful food parcels from the Dominions and Colonies, the spirit of the thousands of

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