

few days, I have no doubt that we shall be able to demonstrate to one another and to the world the advantages of our dissimilarity, the richness of our diversity, the excitement of our variety. We shall be able to do so because we are members of an association, not an institution. In this Commonwealth there is no structure to contain us; there are no fetters to chafe us. The Commonwealth is a reflection of its 32 members and of their desire to consult and co-operate with one another. There is no artificial adhesive. Nor is there any voting, any constitution, any flag, any headquarters. This association is neither regional in nature nor specialized in its interests. The Commonwealth is an organism, and this fact guarantees both its vitality and its flexibility.

The non-formalized, organic nature of the Commonwealth is a feature with which Canada particularly sympathizes. The foundations of our political community do not rest on a comprehensive constitution or a structure of iron-clad statutes, but rather are rooted in the organic mixture of shared values, common traditions and unwritten understandings that have provided the soil from which our policy has grown. This heritage of shared beliefs provides a unity of purpose to the Commonwealth and has found expression in the 1971 Declaration of Commonwealth Principles. In this declaration, Canada and fellow Commonwealth members displayed an impressive unanimity with regard to their attitudes on fundamental questions of human freedom and world peace and security. They regarded these principles as valid not merely for themselves but as a contribution to the collective understanding and goodwill of all mankind.

Canada is very happy with this outward-looking role of the Commonwealth and its endeavours to keep open the doors between the nations of the world that might otherwise remain closed and unused. In the view of Arnold Smith, a Canadian who served the Commonwealth eminently through ten years as its first Secretary-General:

Our task is to use the Commonwealth constructively as one of the available instruments of world politics, to help us all learn to share a planet. Helping humanity learn to share all the world has to offer, sensibly, justly, creatively, must become the overriding goal of responsible politics, and must become a habitual vision of all those who work in the macro-political field.

In an era when many people view with dismay and resignation the upsurge of political, economic and social conflicts that menace global harmony, the Commonwealth association continues to prove that a rela-