

All parties in this House have supported the actions taken by the Prime Minister and Government of Canada to hasten a peaceful end to apartheid. A central element of our policy has been to recognize and enlarge the important role of the Commonwealth in encouraging peaceful change in southern Africa. Members of the House shared the Prime Minister's determination that the meetings he chaired in Vancouver of the Commonwealth Heads of Government should maintain the pressure upon South Africa to end apartheid.

Four of the Front Line States are members of the Commonwealth. So are Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi; so was South Africa, until her adherence to apartheid cast her out. Those "family connections" of the Commonwealth impart a unique capacity to help end the evil of apartheid, and help promote secure and enduring economic development. Other nations have more economic influence in southern Africa; but no other organization has the potential political influence of the Commonwealth. That was demonstrated most clearly by the work of the Eminent Persons Group, whose authority rested upon the combined credentials of the individuals involved and the Commonwealth which sponsored them. The negotiating concept formed by the Eminent Persons Group remains the best prospect of ending apartheid, and was obviously the most enduring result of their work. But the Eminent Persons Group was also important as proof that the world's abhorrence of apartheid was not passing and would not wane.

Part of the challenge facing serious opponents of apartheid is to maintain and increase the steady pressure upon Pretoria. That becomes even more important as the Government of South Africa increases its repression and censorship at home, and intensifies its propaganda abroad. Commonwealth Heads of Government, in Vancouver, noted, and I quote: "The unfolding - but often unseen - tragedy of South Africa impels us to ensure that the world continues to focus its attention on apartheid until we meet again in full session." In that spirit, all member countries except Britain accepted a Canadian proposal that a Committee of Foreign Ministers be established to meet periodically between now, and the next Heads of Government meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1989. The mandate of that Committee is broad - "to provide high level impetus and guidance in furthering the objectives agreed upon" by Heads of Government in what has become their Okanagan Statement.