

So agreement was reached, in a sense, to disagree. They agreed on the various forms of the title which would be used in various parts of the Commonwealth. But they also agreed that each of these titles should have a common element in the description of the Sovereign as Queen of her other realms and territories and as Head of the Commonwealth.

It is of great significance, I think that the words which are common to all titles in all parts of Her Majesty's realms are the words "Head of the Commonwealth". It was in 1949 that agreement was reached in London that this phrase, "Head of the Commonwealth," should describe a new relationship of the Queen to the Commonwealth which was made necessary by the inclusion, in the Commonwealth, of a republic. I recall, because I had the great privilege of being present at these discussions, the very earnest effort that was made at that time, in the best traditions of adaptability and flexibility in the Commonwealth association, to find an expression--something which would certainly not be possible in strict legality as it would have been conceived by constitutional lawyers twenty years ago--under which we could include in our Commonwealth association a country with the largest group of people in that association, India, which had declared itself a republic.

That was done, and the expression "Head of the Commonwealth" was then used in proclaiming the accession of Queen Elizabeth II in the United Kingdom. This, is, as I have said, one of the principal common elements in the varying titles which have now been agreed upon. Our Queen then, Mr. Chairman, is Head of a Commonwealth whose members include a republic of which she is not Queen and in which she has no constitutional function to perform. That, I suggest, is striking evidence not only of the adaptability of the Commonwealth to changing conditions but of the political realism and ingenuity of the peoples and the governments who make up the Commonwealth. It is striking evidence of the adaptability, of this association to new conditions and of our power to adjust our constitutional practices and our constitutional procedures to these new conditions. It is one more proof, if proof is needed, that membership in the Commonwealth imposes no limitation whatever on a nation's control over all its affairs, including its constitutional development as a republic or as a monarchy.

For certain members of the Commonwealth--and this certainly includes Canada--the monarchical form is preferable because it symbolizes in a very real way the unbroken continuity in our history and the development of our political institutions from Magna Carta to the sessions of the House of Commons in Ottawa today. The Crown under the monarchical principle also lends, I think, stability and dignity to our national life, and I am sure we all agree that that is important in a democratic system based on the free and active play of party controversies. The Crown as head of the state and as represented in our country, standing above all such controversies, commanding and deserving the respect and loyalty and affection of us all, ensures a more solid and secure foundation for national development than might otherwise be the case under some other form of democratic government.