

close and friendly touch not only with the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries which share this heritage of western civilization, but also with some of the most important countries of Asia. In a world so plagued by division and misunderstanding as ours is today, it is no small advantage that Asian and Western leaders should be able to sit down together in Commonwealth meetings in an atmosphere of close, friendly and complete equality.

There are other links which connect the countries of Asia to the West, and in the course of time I hope there will be many more. Of those which exist at the present time, in my opinion, the Commonwealth nations provide the most important. It is essential that it should be maintained in the interest not only of its members but of all free states.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

There is another group of free states with which we are proud to be associated, namely, those of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The seventh meeting of the Council of the organization took place in Ottawa in September last. I think we were proud and privileged that Ottawa should have been chosen as the scene of that meeting. It was the first time that the North Atlantic Council meeting met under the new order by which it is a council of governments rather than a council merely of foreign ministers. On this occasion the countries were represented by two or three members of each government.

It was a successful meeting itself, and also a great deal of valuable preparatory work was done towards the next meeting which will take place in Rome near the end of November. This may prove to be an even more important session than the recent one. I believe it would be agreed by all those who had the privilege of attending this meeting that the habit of consultation is growing up amongst the North Atlantic group, and that a feeling of community is being developed. We have come to the conclusion that meetings of this Council should be held, not merely to settle crises, but for the continuing business of co-operation. Meetings for that purpose, and it was agreed we should have more of them than we have had in the past, should become as normal as meetings of Parliament.

At this council meeting two goals of the North Atlantic organization were discussed, the short term goal and the long term goal. The short term goal is how to increase our security against military aggression, and the long term goal is how to promote economic and social stability among all the nations of the North Atlantic community; how to bring those nations that make up that community closer together. As for the short term goal, we reviewed our defence programme, and we took an important step which is, I think, related to this programme. We recommended the admission of Greece and Turkey to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. A protocol for that purpose was drawn up and signed in London on Wednesday last by, among others, our representative, the High Commissioner. This protocol will be submitted to this Parliament later for approval before ratification by the Government.

In this connection it might be desirable to postpone that discussion until we see what happens in regard to ratification in other countries which are even more directly concerned with this matter than we are, the United States, the United Kingdom and France. To my mind there is no question