

In the second place, it is clear -- and we can take the West Indies as a good example -- that some common traditions, long-standing contacts and political affinity provide very helpful conditions for the development of relations of the type we have with non-Commonwealth nations as well. When we think of the crises and alarms of Caribbean affairs in recent years, we would agree that anything Canada can do, by virtue of its own association with some peoples in that area, to contribute to prosperity and political stability is well worth doing.

Now I should like to say something about the Lagos conference last month, at which Commonwealth representatives considered the Rhodesian situation. This was not the first time Rhodesia had been considered at a Commonwealth meeting. The readiness of Commonwealth leaders in 1964 to face the question of race relations and issue a declaration of principle on racial equality went far to ensure the continuation of the Commonwealth as a meaningful political institution. Last month the question was again faced in Lagos in an even more explosive form, and again the members displayed their adaptability and their readiness to use the association for constructive consultations. Canada took an important part in the conference, as you know. At the suggestion of our Prime Minister, consultations will continue in two committees, which will have several functions. They will consider sanctions against Rhodesia, aid to Zambia required in connection with the Rhodesian crises and the development of plans for Commonwealth assistance in the large-scale training programme for Rhodesian Africans which is likely to be launched after constitutional government is restored.

These committees provide an interesting example of new Commonwealth machinery devised to help deal with a particularly awkward problem.

Although, as I have pointed out, there is a significant movement away from this emphasis, for most members the most important factor in the Commonwealth is still their relations with Britain.

This is only natural, when you consider the very brief career of independence of many of them and the correspondingly short period for politically significant groups to draw distinctions between their relations with the Commonwealth and their relations with Britain. Indeed, this is an important reason why the Rhodesian crisis is also a Commonwealth crisis, since some African governments have questioned the determination of Britain to suppress the illegal Rhodesian regime and lay the basis for a government in Salisbury responsible to the majority.

However, the members are increasingly coming to look upon the Commonwealth as not only a link with Britain but also a forum for valuable consultation and action among widely scattered and diverse countries. The late Prime Minister of Nigeria had this wider appreciation and accordingly proposed the Lagos meeting. Although Ghana and Tanzania have severed relations with Britain at the call of the Organization of African Unity, President Nyerere at least has