

Commonwealth Prime Ministers Confer

INTERNATIONAL issues as they affected each of the countries represented and the Commonwealth generally were discussed in London June 27-July 6 at the seventh meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers held since the end of the Second World War.

Succeeding Sir Winston Churchill, chairman of the last meeting held in January-February 1955, Sir Anthony Eden, Prime Minister of Great Britain, was in the chair. Among the Commonwealth colleagues he welcomed to the deliberations were three Prime Ministers attending in that capacity for the first time—the Hon. J. G. Strydom, of South Africa, Mr. Mohamad Ali, of Pakistan, and the Hon. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, of Ceylon. The Canadian Delegation was led by Prime Minister St. Laurent, who was accompanied by Mr. L. B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs. The other Prime Ministers in attendance were the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, of Australia, the Rt. Hon. S. G. Holland, of New Zealand, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, of India, and Lord Malvern, of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Reporting to the House of Commons on July 9 following his return from London, Mr. St. Laurent said that, as is customary, the conference did not seek to reach any collective decision or take definite action. Its main purpose, he pointed out, was "to assist in bringing points of view closer together". Earlier, Mr. St. Laurent had tabled the communiqué issued on July 6 at the close of the conference. The texts of the communiqué and of Mr. St. Laurent's statement are given below.

TEXT OF COMMUNIQUÉ

During the past ten days Commonwealth Prime Ministers have together reviewed the current state of international affairs. Their discussions have again revealed a sense of common purpose in their approach to the major problems of the day. The peoples of the Commonwealth all share the common heritage of parliamentary democracy. They respect aspirations for freedom and self-government, and they take pride in what they themselves have done in helping to fulfil those aspirations.

This meeting has been held at a significant stage in the development of international relations. A new element has been introduced by the growing recognition of the devastating power of thermonuclear weapons. Other developments of importance have taken place in the world, including changes in the Soviet Union. The common understanding which the Prime Ministers have reached in their review will form a valuable background which will assist each government in the formulation and pursuit of its national policies.

Despite the high hopes with which the world emerged from the last war, new international tensions developed. These have given rise to increasing fears and suspicion. They have resulted in vast expenditures on armaments and economic distortions which have delayed the full development of the world's natural resources for the common good.