

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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A NEW CONCEPT OF THE COMMONWEALTH

A speech by Mr. J.G. Diefenbaker, Prime Minister of Canada, at a State Banquet at Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, on November 28, 1958.

No one in my position could be but deeply appreciative of the kind sentiments expressed by your Prime Minister in that very moving and eloquent address. As you came near the end of your remarks, you mentioned that in my country the snow would be falling. I think you are right, and I can tell you this, having regard to the hospitality extended to my wife and myself, the friendliness of the reception that has been accorded us, the outstanding nature of the democracy which you maintain here in Southeast Asia, we in Canada will be with you until the snow falls and the frost comes in Malaya....

The welcome that has been extended to us here is of such a nature that it will always be among our most treasured memories and my hope is, Mr. Prime Minister, that you will not long delay a visit to Canada. Whether you come when the snow is falling or when the temperature is even higher than it is here in Malaya at the present time, the welcome that you will receive will be a warm one from the people of Canada who have a high admiration for you and your achievements.

I was very much interested in your recital of the resources of our country. As a matter of fact from now on I think I will take you with me, because you have a better knowledge of them, displayed with such readiness of speech, than I have myself. But as I listened to you enunciating the principles upon which this Federation is built - a common dedication of the principle of freedom, a realization that under parliamentary government, democracy has its highest fruit in those freedoms to which you referred, and in the maintenance of the rule of law - those are the things in which, distant though we may be in time and in miles, we have that abiding oneness that is representative of the nations which make up this Commonwealth.

I have travelled in the last few weeks, visiting the various parts of the Commonwealth and in particular I have emphasized the importance and the significance of the Commonwealth