

Mr. Pearson: There is evidence, strong evidence, which I and others have received, to suggest that if the fighting in Egypt between Anglo-French and Israeli forces and Egyptian forces had continued and if the United Nations Assembly cease-fire resolution had been repudiated or rejected, the pressures in regard to separation from the Commonwealth in certain Asian members of the Commonwealth would have been so great that it would have been indeed very difficult to resist them. We have had evidence to that effect both from New Delhi and from Karachi.

Mr. Churchill: Has that not been denied by both Ceylon and India?

Mr. Pearson: This has been questioned, I believe, in Ceylon, including the Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, I am giving my opinion on the basis of information which I have received from the highest authorities in the Government of India. I am not suggesting Mr. Speaker—and in my earlier statement on this I think I made it clear in the House I did not suggest—those pressures affected that we sometimes call the old members of the Commonwealth, but they certainly did affect those new members which, as I have just said, constitute four-fifths of the population of the Commonwealth.

It seems to me that this Commonwealth association, which all its members wish to preserve to be of enduring value must strive for the widest possible areas of agreement between its members. It seems to me also that the limits of such areas, though not often expressed, may be pretty clearly discerned. Whether or not we speak of it, there are certain fundamental things that unite the governments and the peoples of the Commonwealth: freedom, personal and national; parliamentary democracy and the supremacy of the individual over the state. There is also a certain basis of morality in political action to which Commonwealth members are by tacit consent expected to adhere. Such a basis can easily be disregarded, on the other hand, by those who do not share our Commonwealth beliefs and our ways of doing things. They have, for instance, often been and are being disregarded by the Soviet Union in Hungary; but the barbaric luxury of this type of conduct is not open to us. Indeed, it is completely foreign to us and that is one reason, perhaps a main reason, why we can and must work together in the Commonwealth. It is more important than ever for us at this time to strengthen within the Commonwealth our will to work together in defence of these principles; for very significant events are now about to occur in the Commonwealth as significant perhaps as those which took place 10 years ago when India, Pakistan and Ceylon became members.

We often also, Mr. Speaker, speak of the Commonwealth as a bridge, as it is, between Asia and the West; and perhaps it would not be inappropriate at this moment if I expressed my own feeling of gratitude for what the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin), in his recent trip to Asia, has done