

It will take time to weigh the value of this achievement, and it is foolish to be final and dogmatic in our conclusions at the present time. The long assessment of its importance must depend upon the implementation by those concerned of the principles on which we agreed and on the influence on the thinking and future actions of the governments represented in London.

It is still a convention of the Commonwealth prime ministers' meetings that we do not discuss disputes between Commonwealth countries, although this convention is becoming a little shaky in the light of the experience of the last two Conferences. We faced this convention on the question of relations between India and Pakistan, particularly of course in regard to Kashmir. There is no specific reference to this dispute as such in the communiqué, but we are all conscious at the Conference of the importance within the Commonwealth of this dispute, and what a wonderful thing it would be if the Conference could do something to encourage the settlement of this dispute which has been making relationships between the two largest members of the Commonwealth difficult for some years. At the same time we did not wish to do anything by any formal intervention which would make such a solution more difficult. It is rather apparent that at the moment there is not much an outside nation can do, but the Commonwealth Conference gave the two governments concerned an opportunity to talk about this in London, an opportunity which would be easier to take to their advantage of, perhaps, than by arranging a special meeting at this time in Pakistan or in India. I think some progress was made in that direction.

British Guiana

The Conference also directed a good deal of attention to two local areas small in area but large in problems and in potential dangers, Cyprus and British Guiana. The paragraph in the communiqué on Cyprus includes an appeal to the countries concerned — and we had in mind particularly the countries most concerned, Greece and Turkey — to refrain from any action which might unduly hamper the task of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force to which members of the Commonwealth are contributing, or might prejudice the endeavours of the United Nations to find a solution in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. So far as British Guiana is concerned, it is almost a hopelessly confused situation down there, and it is very difficult indeed to see what can be done by the intervention of the Commonwealth to clear up that confusion, remove the danger and bring back some order to that very distracted colony.

It was suggested at the Conference that perhaps the United Nations could move in there and in some way hold the line while elections were being held. But it became clear from the evidence we received that the basic difficulty, and the underlying danger in that difficulty, is the fact that there are two parties in British Guiana organized completely along racial lines, Indian and one African, and that the leaders of these parties are getting support entirely from one race or the other. This has aroused emotions, prejudices and fears that can only be removed by some kind of arrangement between the leaders to bring the people together in the way they used to be together before this division occurred. There is no difficulty about independence. The British Government is only too anxious to give this colony independence as soon as any government can assure order. In our communiqué we made an appeal to the leaders of the two parties, that is the leader of the Indian races, to get together and do something about this.