

plans are already being made to hold a meeting of parliamentarians from French-speaking countries. In this way, Canada believes that its relations with the Commonwealth and with the French-speaking world can enrich and strengthen each other.

Until five years ago, Canada was the only independent Commonwealth country in the Western hemisphere. Now there are five, and, in addition, six Commonwealth islands in the Caribbean have, or are about to achieve, a new "associate" status which gives them a measure of independence.

Because of geographical proximity, and other factors, Canadians have long had a special sense of affection for their West Indian neighbours, and we are confident that our long-standing relationship will become more meaningful, and of greater mutual benefit, in this new era of independence. An important, practical step in this direction was taken last year, with the convening in Ottawa of the Commonwealth Caribbean-Canada Conference, which was attended by the Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers of all the Commonwealth Caribbean countries, and presided over by our own Prime Minister, as head of the host government.

We recently experienced a deep loss, when one of the most distinguished leaders of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Sir Donald Sangster, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, passed away. Sir Donald was a good friend of Canada, and was known by many Canadians: he was also a strong believer in the Commonwealth, and what it stands for in the world today.

I have been speaking of the changing nature of our Commonwealth association, particularly as it affects Canada. The conflict in Vietnam, while not a Commonwealth problem, is of great concern to countries of the Commonwealth.