

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 53/22 NEW ZEALAND, CANADA AND THE COMMONWEALTH

Text of a radio broadcast by the High Commissioner for Canada in New Zealand, Mr. E.H. Norman, made in Wellington, N.Z., on July 26, 1953.

As this is the first time on which I have had the privilege of speaking to a New Zealand audience, I wish to grasp the opportunity to extend to you the warmest of greetings and heartiest of good wishes on behalf of the Government and people of Canada. This expression of goodwill is no mere perfunctory duty or threadbare ritual. It is, despite any inadequacy of my own words, the true reflection of deeply felt sentiments which we in Canada entertain for our sister Dominion "down under." We learn as school children something of the beautiful country you inhabit, the temperate climate you enjoy, and the political institutions and cultural background which you share with us. Those general ideas might stimulate the imagination of a school child, but they could easily be forgotten by the adult. Nevertheless, separated though we are by thousands of miles of water, the hard fateful experiences of two world wars have brought you very close to us. In the last war you had 12 per cent of your population serving in the armed forces overseas, one of the highest proportions to be found in the experience of any country. At the same time that you sent so many to the battle fields, you maintained a constant flow of food which materially contributed to the defence of the United Kingdom, the heart and nerve centre of our joint struggle. But it was the spirit and courage of your men which won the respect and affection of all Canadians. Such names as Freyberg and Hillary, exemplars of New Zealand valour and high endeavour, have earned world-wide recognition; in this tribute we Canadians are glad to share.

All this, however, one can appreciate without having visited New Zealand. But in the few days since my arrival I have learned at first-hand more of your qualities - your friendliness and hospitality.

So, when I say that my wife and I have been made to feel most welcome and happy in New Zealand, I can also say that Canada is happy to be with New Zealand in that wide system of world association, the Commonwealth. Whether in war or peace it is this association which binds us close together with a common heritage, with common ideals and aspirations. We have, joining us together in fraternal bonds, that unifying and stabilizing factor, the Crown, which we venerate as you do. Both in New Zealand and Canada we have cherished it, since to us it represents the natural evolution and continuity of our history. It is the very essence of our free way of life, since it enables us to honour the head of state, while criticizing as sharply as we wish the head of the government.

I would like to recall to you briefly two examples of joint Commonwealth action on a grand scale in which both New Zealand and Canada participated. First, there is the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, which allowed us to become acquainted personally with many of your airmen. This experiment in collective action organized within the Commonwealth is now a matter of record and can be viewed as an unqualified success. The second, the Colombo Plan, is, of course, a continuing project. It has gained momentum and gives every evidence of developing in scope and depth. It makes manifest the desire and ability on the part of the older members of the Commonwealth to provide economic and technical assistance for the newer members who are, at the same time, faced with acute problems in their social and industrial life. Its underlying assumption is that whatever contributes to the health of one must be for the good of all.

Since the end of World War II, there have been cataclysmic shifts in the balance of power throughout the world, caused chiefly by the intrusion of Communism into Asia. In these post-war years, three new members of the Commonwealth, India, Pakistan and Ceylon, have appeared in that continent. These newest members of the Commonwealth have, at the same time, the longest history. The emergence of these peoples as independent nations and their voluntary entry into the Commonwealth, where every race and creed work together on terms of equality, illustrate what vitality there is in this free association of nations. The membership in the Commonwealth of these Asian nations provides a bridge between East and West, which has already served, and will continue to serve, I am sure, the interests of peace. Perhaps the metaphor of a bridge is misleading because it suggests something rigid and fixed, whereas the Commonwealth by its nature is flexible and loose. Yet, we value greatly the intimate link which the Commonwealth affords between its great Asian and its older members. This association helps us in Canada to view international affairs from a global viewpoint. It serves as a stimulus to that provincial self-centred attitude which comes so easily to those living in a vast country such as Canada.

One aspect of Commonwealth relations which, while it cannot be measured in terms of military divisions or financial profit and loss, is perhaps the richest, namely, the constant consultation of the leaders of the various governments within it. These frequent and informal consultations allow each of us to share in the wisdom and experience of the other. In this fashion we learn fresh lessons in the school of public and diplomatic relations, the necessity for fair play and compromise.

One may well ask does Canadian membership in NATO, for example, or our close association with the United States, conflict in any way with our position within the Commonwealth? My answer would be definitely "no." Our membership in NATO is designed to strengthen the defences of the Western world against possible aggression. This contribution to security in Western Europe serves the interests of the other members of the Commonwealth, and indeed, of all countries who desire to maintain peace. Geographically, of course, we are in North America and inevitably we are closely associated with our great neighbour, the United States. While we have one foot in the new world, however, we also have a foot in the old world, and in our relationship with the

United States, which fortunately has been of a most co-operative and friendly nature, I think no one can fairly say that we have forgotten our interests in other parts of the world.

It may be further objected that in the economic field we, being in the dollar area, are cutting across the interests of those of you who are in the sterling area. From the point of view of Commonwealth trading relations, it is perhaps regrettable that Canada is in the dollar rather than the sterling area. Yet, in our participation last November and most recently this June in the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, we showed our desire to work together with other members of the Commonwealth towards the lowering of barriers to world trade and easing, insofar as we could, the strain on the sterling area. That you in New Zealand have been pulling your weight is attested by yesterday's news of your $34\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds surplus with the non-sterling area.

The Commonwealth is not a selfish, exclusive group. Its traditions of consultation rule out formal commitments or concerted efforts to face other powers with a self-seeking political or economic bloc. Its true nature has been well set forth in the words of our Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent, whom I quote:

"I think that the real link between the various members of the Commonwealth is their common ideals, their memories of association in the past, their intimate conviction that that association in the past has been for the benefit of their people, and their desire to conserve that association in the future for the benefit of their people. I do not think that we are being presumptuous or conceited when we believe, and even when we express the belief, that this Commonwealth group not only works for the benefit of its own peoples but is an effective instrument for the good of free mankind throughout the whole world."

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