

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE COMMONWEALTH
IN CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1956 - 1965

by

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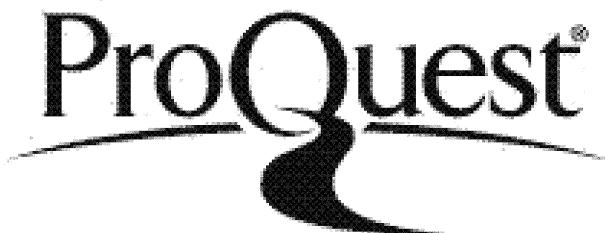


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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the significance of the Commonwealth in Canadian foreign policy, the motivations behind Canadian policy and the reasons for changes in this policy in the period 1956-1965 in particular. It does so by evaluating Canadian policy towards the development and use of Commonwealth institutions for cooperation.

The thesis begins by sketching the development of Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth between 1944 and 1955. It argues that Canadian behaviour during this period set a pattern, which as it evolved in the face of changing conditions, was generally pursued through the period 1956 to 1965. The Commonwealth's role in Canadian policy was as a 'bridge' between the West and the new members from the developing world in support of Western interests in the Cold War. The thesis then looks at the year 1956. When the Suez Crisis occurred, the Commonwealth seemed poised for another transformation as members prepared to admit the first African member and considered British plans for closer economic links with Europe. The Canadian government's actions highlight its efforts to counteract division within the Commonwealth and preserve the 'bridge' to the developing world.

The next three chapters review the record of John Diefenbaker's premiership. When he came to office in 1957, he proposed upgrading Canadian foreign policy towards the Commonwealth. Diefenbaker launched initiatives on trade and aid, and had to react to changing patterns of membership, a Commonwealth crisis over South Africa and the British application for EEC membership. Where the Diefenbaker government diverged from the established pattern of Canadian behaviour, its policies failed. For the most part, however, it maintained this pattern as the only practical way to effectively use the modern

Commonwealth in ways conducive to the maintenance and advancement of Canadian interests.

The last chapter examines the Canadian government's support for the Commonwealth secretariat. The thesis argues that this was not a substantial shift in Canadian policy, but rather a reflection of changes which had taken place within the Commonwealth and was largely consistent with previous policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Producing a doctoral thesis is frequently seen as a very lonely task. The truth is that although it is the work of one person, it has been produced with assistance of many - too many, in fact to mention them all. At the risk of offending some by mentioning a few, I would like to acknowledge my great debt to my supervisors, Dr. John Kent and Dr. Peter Lyon, who gave me the freedom to do what I wanted and the guidance to ensure that I wanted to do what I ought to do. Of all the libraries, archives and other institutions whose resources I made use of, it is unfair to single out just a few, but I owe particular thanks to the staff at the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa and the Public Records Office in London. The staff at the Canadian Institute of International Affairs in Toronto are due special thanks for continuing to treat me as one of them and sparing no effort to help me along the way. Finally, I want to thank my families, in Canada and in Italy, for their support and assistance. Above all, I want to thank Paola, without whose love and support I would still be sitting at Kew, and to whom this thesis is dedicated.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| AUBC..... | Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth |
| BWI..... | British West Indies |
| CC..... | Cabinet Conclusion |
| CP..... | Cabinet Paper |
| CAB..... | Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux |
| CATC..... | Commonwealth Air Transport Council |
| CDFC..... | Commonwealth Development Finance Corporation |
| CEC..... | Commonwealth Economic Committee |
| CECC..... | Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council |
| CELC..... | Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee |
| CELU..... | Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit |
| CIIA..... | Canadian Institute of International Affairs |
| CLC..... | Commonwealth Liaison Committee |
| CPMM..... | Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting |
| CRO..... | Commonwealth Relations Office |
| CSG..... | Commonwealth Study Group |
| CTB..... | Commonwealth Telecommunications Board |
| CTEC..... | Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference |
| DEA..... | Department of External Affairs |
| ECSC..... | European Coal and Steel Community |
| EEC..... | European Economic Community |
| EFTA..... | European Free Trade Area/Association |
| FO..... | Foreign Office |
| GATT..... | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade |
| IBRD..... | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) |
| ICC..... | International Control Commission in Indochina |
| IDA..... | International Development Association |
| IMF..... | International Monetary Fund |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| MFN..... | Most-favoured-nation |
| MG..... | Manuscript Group (Public Archives of Canada) |
| NATO..... | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NORAD..... | North American Air Defence (Agreement) |
| OAU..... | Organization for African Unity |
| OECD..... | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OEEC..... | Organization for European Economic Cooperation |
| PAC..... | Public Archives of Canada |
| PRO..... | Public Records Office (London) |
| PRO CAB..... | British Cabinet or Cabinet Office Records |
| PRO DO..... | Dominions Office or Commonwealth Relations Office Records |
| RG..... | Record Group (Public Archives of Canada) |
| SCAAP..... | Special Commonwealth African Aid Plan |
| SSEA..... | Secretary of State for External Affairs |
| UK..... | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| UKCCC..... | United Kingdom-Canada Continuing Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs |
| UN..... | United Nations |
| UNCTAD..... | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| US..... | United States |
| USSEA..... | Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs |

PREFACE

This thesis examines the significance of the Commonwealth in Canadian foreign policy, with an emphasis on the decade from 1956 to 1965. It does so by evaluating Canadian policy towards the use and development of Commonwealth institutions for cooperation. In so doing, it tries to account for the motivations of Canadian policy and to assess the Commonwealth's importance to Canada and the factors contributing to any changes in this.

The starting point, 1956, is the year of the Suez Crisis, an episode which shook the Commonwealth. The stress it placed on the Commonwealth shows much about the nature of the "new" post-war Commonwealth that emerged in the late 1940s with the addition of three South Asian members and the advent of republican membership. The end point, 1965, is the year when, in apparent contradiction to longstanding policy, the Canadian government supported the creation of a central Commonwealth Secretariat. This decade encompasses a period of profound change within the Commonwealth as it was transformed by decolonization, and British policy towards Europe challenged some of its long standing assumptions. The thesis reviews Canadian governments' responses to these changes by means of selective studies of key issues important to the Commonwealth. It is not a comprehensive survey of Commonwealth affairs or Canadian foreign policy, but it tries to identify aspects of continuity and change in Canadian approaches to the Commonwealth and to assess the Commonwealth's role as one of a growing number of international organizations through which Canadian governments pursued foreign policy objectives.

There has been no broad treatment based on primary sources of the Commonwealth's role in Canadian foreign policy over the decade which forms the main focus of this thesis. Most of the specific episodes it discusses are treated within more general works on Canadian foreign policy or, in some

instances, in studies focused solely on the event.¹ This thesis draws the various strands together in a single discussion as to how these often disparate events reflected a generally consistent primary role for the Commonwealth in Canadian foreign policy.

Much of the originality of this thesis stems from its extensive use of both Canadian and British official records. Most of the Canadian records were obtained through access to information procedures and were previously unavailable to researchers. The use of British records, in addition to giving the record of the main protagonist within the Commonwealth, throws into relief some of the chief Canadian concerns by providing alternative perspectives to issues facing the Commonwealth. In 1945, Britain held a unique position at the centre of the Commonwealth. This, and Britain's greater relative power, gave British governments tremendous influence in shaping the Commonwealth's evolution in the post-war period. Invariably, they were important interlocutors for the Canadian government in Commonwealth matters. At times the direction British governments would have liked to see the Commonwealth go were in accordance with Canadian preferences and at times they were at variance. Indeed, the British sources occasionally contain comments about the Canadians and their attitudes which might have taken them aback had they been seen at the time.

Access to British records is limited by the thirty year rule, but some Canadian records are available up to and including 1965. Even then, some Canadian files are still closed, as are most of the relevant personal records held by the Manuscript Division of the Public Archives of Canada. Most of the Diefenbaker papers are held at the Diefenbaker Centre at the University

¹A bibliographic essay at the end of the thesis discusses the published literature in more detail.

of Saskatchewan and are still being prepared for access.² The departmental records are, however, fairly comprehensive and some aspects unavailable through the Department of External Affairs records are available through the records of other departments or the British record (as far as it runs). Inevitably, there will be room for further studies of the issues considered here, especially of specific issues where individuals whose papers are not now readily available may have played key roles not reflected in departmental records. For a survey of the Commonwealth dimensions of Canadian policy in the years 1965-65, however, the available resource material is more than ample.

²The first systematic evaluation of them will be contained in a forthcoming book by Professor Dennis Smith of the University of Western Ontario.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Coping with change was a central theme in Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth after the Second World War. Post-war Canadian governments faced the potentially difficult task of relating positively to a fast changing Commonwealth and fitting it into their burgeoning foreign policy as it operated within an international system at once paralyzed by Cold War politics and invigorated by the effects of decolonization. The 'Statute of Westminster Commonwealth'¹ smoothly changed into a 'new', multiracial Commonwealth with the addition of three South Asian members in 1947-8. Then, between 1956 and 1965, the Commonwealth underwent a series of changes affecting its composition, character and purposes, producing a 'third Commonwealth'. Membership rose from eight in 1956 to ten in 1969 and twenty-one by the end of 1965. Older members, such as Canada, had to adjust to a Commonwealth numerically dominated by members with different perspectives on political and economic issues and different priorities for Commonwealth activity. Nevertheless, despite the changes to the Commonwealth, Canadian policy concerning the Commonwealth, the use and development of Commonwealth institutions for cooperation, and the Commonwealth's role in Canadian foreign policy, all remained essentially unchanged from 1947 through the period 1956-1965.

The underlying continuity of Canadian policy is easily obscured by the tremendous variation in specific policy outcomes which took place on any issue over time. Successive Canadian governments, sometimes the same government, long opposed, then later supported open Commonwealth criticism of

¹This originally comprised Britain and the old Dominions: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the Irish Free State, and Newfoundland. Newfoundland's relinquished its Dominion status in 1934 as a condition for receiving financial aid from Britain. The Irish Free State formally left the Commonwealth in 1949.

South Africa's internal policies. They also accepted, then opposed, then finally accepted, closer British trade ties with Western Europe. Most dramatically of all, Canadian governments had, dating back to the 1897 Colonial Conference, consistently opposed the creation of a central Commonwealth body. In 1964, however, Canadian support for a secretariat was initially critical. The particulars of Canadian policy responded to changing circumstances, but through it all Canadian policy was guided by the need to maintain the Commonwealth's role as bridge between the West and the newly independent members from 'under-developed areas'.

The Commonwealth's 'bridging' role, of course, had not always existed. Prior to 1947, there were no so-called 'under-developed' members. In fact, the Commonwealth did not even serve as a 'bridge' between the ethnically and geographically diverse members of the 'white' Commonwealth. As the old members gained internal self-government, starting with Canada in 1867, and followed by the rest of the old members between 1901 (Australia) and 1921 (Irish Free State), each was more concerned with its own interests than any notion of collective interests. They were separated by vast distances and were not even necessarily united by blood and kinship. The French in Canada and the Afrikaners in South Africa represented significant non-British minorities in the 'British' Commonwealth. There never really was, then, a 'golden age' of Commonwealth cohesion and harmony to look back on and against which to measure future change. Instead, Commonwealth ties were almost exclusively viewed in terms of members' relationships with Britain.

Canada was no exception to this. Of particular value to the Canadian government before the war, was the Commonwealth's role as a constitutional forum to assert and extend Canadian independence from Britain. Indeed, much of the Commonwealth's early development parallels the constitutional history of an independent Canada and its quest to pull away from an imperial external

policy and conduct its own foreign relations. Successive evolutionary moves towards independence within the Commonwealth and the rejection of imperial federation went hand in hand with Canadian government efforts to assert and expand its autonomy. Even after the formal recognition of complete Dominion autonomy in external as well as internal matters by the Statute of Westminster of 1931, this history of dissent bequeathed a certain duality towards relations with Britain and the Commonwealth which was still observable twenty and even thirty years later.²

This duality manifested itself in two conflicting policy tendencies which coexisted in Canadian government attitudes towards the Commonwealth. One tendency, or predisposition, resisted any strengthening of ties between Commonwealth members as incipient centralization and sought, instead, to maximize Canada's freedom to act unencumbered by collective Commonwealth commitments. Because of this, Canadian governments were always hesitant to agree to any formal institutionalization of the Commonwealth relationship. Nevertheless, there also existed for Canada an attraction to Britain in particular, traditionally the focus of Commonwealth relations, but also to the Commonwealth more generally. The Commonwealth provided a diversity of external partners and a possible alternative to the overwhelming preponderance of the United States in Canada's external relations and trade which gave a positive reason for pursuing Commonwealth ties. The preference for loose, undefined linkages between members implicit in the first tendency was not necessarily mirrored by efforts to strengthen ties in the second. Canadian governments, nevertheless, recognized, that ties should not become too loose and that they needed to develop actively cooperative relationships within the Commonwealth if it was to be used positively.

²John W. Holmes described the contemporary manifestations of Anglophobia and Anglophilia among Canadians and the reciprocal equivalents in Britain in: "The Anglo-Canadian Neurosis: A Mood of Exasperation", Round Table. (223, July 1966).

The Commonwealth was only one of a number of multilateral instruments which the Canadian government had in its foreign policy repertoire. It was not by any means the most important one, and indeed, the Commonwealth's role in Canadian foreign policy between 1956 and 1965 was much reduced from what it had been, for example, before the Second World War or especially in the late 1940s. Nevertheless, as an increasingly specialized association with which Canadian governments could base ties with an important set of developing countries, it was used to complement organizations such as the United Nations and NATO where Canadian governments focused their political and defence relations. Most of the basic questions of Canadian policy in these areas centred around the Cold War. Within the foreign policy framework which the Cold War represented, the Commonwealth gave the Canadian government a limited means to operate away from the United States' preponderant presence as the leader of the Western alliance and Canada's overpowering neighbour. It was not, however, an escape from the Cold War. Canadian governments had greater latitude when acting within the Commonwealth than might have been available elsewhere, but they did not forget their membership in the Western alliance when they dealt with Commonwealth matters. Indeed, it was for its potential contribution to Western interests that the Commonwealth's bridging role was deemed so important by Canadian governments, especially since, from the mid-1950s onwards, the Cold War was prominently conducted within the developing world. Moreover, this role reflected a fairly realistic appraisal by Canadian governments of how the Commonwealth could be used. Canada was not prepared to sacrifice its wider interests and autonomy for the sake of Commonwealth cohesion, neither were other members, especially the newer ones. This imposed obvious limits on what the Commonwealth could achieve. For initiatives undertaken via the Commonwealth to succeed, governments had to reconcile their objectives with the Commonwealth's capacity to fulfil them, especially as it underwent major changes between 1956 and 1965.

The Making of Canadian Foreign Policy³

Like the basic pattern of Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth, the fundamental framework within which the Canadian government made its policies regarding the Commonwealth was also laid down in the first post-war decade and continued into the second. As foreign policy questions were rarely the source of domestic debate in Canada, and never a major election issue, Canadian foreign policy tended to be almost exclusively a product of the government apparatus. Ministers, especially prime ministers, being politicians, were keenly aware of the domestic context of policy and so too were officials since their duty included warning their political masters of "politically unpalatable factors."⁴ Nevertheless, foreign policy decisions were generally made without direct input from other parts of Canadian society.

During his long tenure as Canada's prime minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King often hid behind the constitutional formula "parliament will decide" and "cabinet must be consulted" to avoid making commitments at Commonwealth meetings. However, the truth of the matter was that he himself mostly determined the conduct of Canadian external relations. As both prime minister and, by law and personal preference, secretary of state for external affairs (SSEA), with only a nascent Department of External Affairs (DEA) to offer advice, Mackenzie King's policy was, at least until the end of the Second World War, subject to readily forthcoming cabinet acquiescence, Canada's policy. Canada's international reticence during Mackenzie King's premiership obscured the development of a small but talented corps of

³This is only a brief sketch of the subject, a more detailed picture is provided in the various secondary sources cited below.

⁴John Holmes, The Shaping of the Peace. Canada and the Search for World Order: 1943-1957. Volume 1. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1979) p. 298.

officials in DEA under the direction of Oscar Skelton who was under-secretary of state for external affairs from 1925 until his death in 1941. Men such as Lester Pearson and Norman Robertson, who would influence Canadian external policy in a variety of roles until the mid-1960s, were part of a group which formed DEA's contribution to what is often considered the 'golden age' of Canadian bureaucracy from the mid-1930s to 1957.⁵

The demands of Canada's increased responsibilities brought about by its important role in the Second World War expanded the scope of Canada's international involvement. As DEA responded to the challenges and opportunities that this presented, its activist and internationalist officials took on more and more responsibility. In doing so, they had to drag along Mackenzie King, who was still reluctant to countenance new international commitments. This began to change in 1946 when Louis St. Laurent was named as Canada's first full-time SSEA. In day-to-day operations, the new minister allowed his officials substantial leeway and, even more importantly, he was prepared to argue forcefully in cabinet in favour of the activist foreign policy the department favoured. This new departmental freedom was enhanced when St. Laurent became prime minister in late 1948 and named the USSEA, Pearson, to succeed him as minister. Under Pearson, DEA was able to take advantage of the absence of pre-war divisions over whether or not Canada should undertake international involvements and strengthen its position within the Canadian bureaucracy.⁶ Thus, unlike most other departments, DEA's numbers continued to increase in the post-war period as they had during the war, although not fast enough to keep up with all the activities it was now able to undertake.

⁵See for example: JL Granatstein, The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins, 1935-1957. (Toronto, Oxford University, 1982).

⁶John English, Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson. Volume One: 1897-1948. (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989) p. 320.

An important feature of the structure of Canadian foreign policy decision-making was the absence of a cabinet committee overseeing foreign policy.⁷ The institution of cabinet committees in the Canadian federal government did not begin in earnest until the Second World War⁸ and through to the end of the period under consideration there was never such a committee on external affairs. This left the prime minister with more control over foreign policy, even after a separate SSEA was appointed than if there had been a committee. The prime minister's control was, however, discretionary. Different prime ministers chose to involve themselves to different degrees. The 'ideal', so far as DEA and the SSEA were concerned, was what obtained under St. Laurent. As prime minister, St. Laurent, having chafed under Mackenzie King's reluctance to give him latitude in running DEA, did not interfere and not surprisingly, Pearson, as SSEA, worked well with his officials.

The excellent relationship between DEA, Pearson and St. Laurent meant that the foreign policy bureaucracy had a great deal of autonomy in conducting Canadian external policy in the period until the Liberal defeat in 1957. There was a broad national consensus in favour of the general line Pearson and his officials wished to take and cabinet and parliament posed few obstacles. The department's general freedom from outside intrusions in its conduct of Canadian external policy extended, for the most part, to Commonwealth relations as well. Nevertheless, with so much of Commonwealth relations revolving around Commonwealth prime ministers, the Commonwealth's

⁷ A Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs had existed since 1945, but much of its discussions tended to be devoted towards reviewing expenditures. For a discussion of this committee's activities, see: Don Page, "The Standing Committee on External Affairs 1945 to 1983 - Who Participates and When?" in David Taras, Parliament and Canadian Foreign Policy. (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1985).

⁸ See: James Eayrs, The Art of the Possible: Government and Foreign Policy in Canada. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1961) pp. 12-15.

centrepiece being their periodic meetings, even after the designation of a SSEA, the prime minister retained a more active role in conducting Canadian policy regarding the Commonwealth than he did in other areas. Even so, ordinarily DEA would prepare background papers on specific issues to lay the groundwork for the prime minister to develop his ideas. In preparation for Commonwealth meetings, for example, whole briefing books were compiled to assist the prime minister. This gave DEA, which had primary responsibility for doing this, the ability to make its positions felt even where it was not the principal Canadian interlocutor.

Even with this latitude, however, DEA did not operate in isolation. The wide range of issues addressed in contemporary external relations meant that responsibility often overlapped with or required the expertise of other departments. The most important among these in Commonwealth matters were the Department of Finance, the Bank of Canada, and the Department of Trade and Commerce. Others, such as the Department of Transport and the Department of Agriculture were also consulted when functionally necessary. Activities in Commonwealth functional bodies were handled through the appropriate government department and so, for example, the Colombo Plan initially came under the Department of Trade and Commerce's International Economic and Technical Co-operation Division until Canada's aid activities became so extensive that in 1960 they were grouped together in an External Aid Office under DEA.

The division of functional responsibility for different technical aspects of Canada's Commonwealth relations entailed a tremendous amount of interdepartmental liaison, especially through official committees, to develop and coordinate Canadian policy on Commonwealth issues. In the so called 'golden age', this liaison and the control senior officials were thereby able to exert on policy making was made more comprehensive and effective by the

close personal relations among these senior civil servants in the relatively small world of Ottawa in the 1940s and 1950s.⁹ In the case of Commonwealth economic meetings and institutions, especially those related to and emanating from the 1958 Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, because the minister of finance took a leading role, his officials bore much of the work load. External Affairs, however, generally remained the principal conduit for communications within the bureaucracy in Ottawa and between other Commonwealth members.

This situation prevailed from the post-war period through the period under consideration ending in 1965. It was most harmonious under the Liberal governments which held power most of the time, the only exception being the years 1957 to 1963 when John Diefenbaker and the Progressive Conservatives were in office. Relations between DEA and the prime minister in these years were very much the antithesis of those which prevailed during the St. Laurent years.¹⁰ Diefenbaker viewed DEA officials suspiciously because of their previously close association with Pearson, who after moving from the bureaucracy to the Liberal ministry became the leader of the Liberal party in 1958. Unable to see beyond his own intense partisanship and instinct for seeking domestic political advantage, Diefenbaker distrusted the "Pearsonalities" in DEA, as he called them, because of their Liberal associations. He also felt that they were too insulated from political pressures.¹¹ There was also a clash of styles. Diefenbaker had no patience

⁹See especially Granatstein, The Ottawa Men. *passim*.

¹⁰Frank Hayes, The Evolution of Canada's Commonwealth Relations, 1945-1968. (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1979) p. 255.

¹¹H.Basil Robinson, Diefenbaker's World: A Populist in World Affairs. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989) p. 35.

for the shaded language of diplomacy or lengthy, detailed, explanations.¹² This created obvious communications difficulties and threatened to leave DEA out of the foreign policy decision making process. Indeed, in some instances Sir Saville Garner, the British High Commissioner (1957-1962), had better access to Diefenbaker than DEA officials. To mitigate this, Robert Bryce, the cabinet secretary, arranged for Diefenbaker to have a personal liaison officer from DEA, Basil Robinson. For the first year or so of Diefenbaker's prime ministership, Robinson had to spend a great deal of effort passing on correspondence to DEA that Diefenbaker treated as so personal that the officials could not perform their jobs properly.¹³ At times, the British government, aware of this fact, sought to take advantage of it by marking Diefenbaker's copy of communications being sent to all Commonwealth governments, 'personal', with the full knowledge that this would at least delay Canadian officials from providing the prime minister with advice and counsel.¹⁴ Diefenbaker, as the British quickly learned, could sometimes let his emotional attachment to the Commonwealth influence his assessment of British proposals that his officials would view more critically.

A similar procedure was also employed by George Drew, Canada's high commissioner in London for most of Diefenbaker's premiership. Drew was Diefenbaker's predecessor as Progressive Conservative leader and just as emotionally attached to Britain and the Commonwealth. He was implacably opposed to British membership in the EEC and willing to use his position to

¹² John Hilliker, The Politicians and the "Personalities": The Diefenbaker Government and the Conduct of Canadian External Relations. (Unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, University of Guelph, 12 June, 1984) p. 4.

¹³ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. p. 39.

¹⁴ See for example: PRO DO 35/8021 Cyprus: Association with Commonwealth - Discussions with Cypriot Leaders [file CON 205/40/10 part C], Draft Circular telegram to Commonwealth Prime Ministers, February, 1960.

encourage Diefenbaker's opposition to it.¹⁵ Sometimes Robinson was able to pass on Drew's telegrams to DEA immediately, at other times not. One result of this was conflicting signals came from the Canadian government as Diefenbaker's statements, reinforced by Drew, went in one direction, and his ministers', incorporating official advice, went in another.

Diefenbaker's relationship with DEA was all the more important because he insisted on a much greater role in foreign policy making than his predecessor. Rather than naming a SSEA on becoming prime minister in June, 1957, he decided to act as his own foreign minister. Even after bringing in Sidney Smith, the president of the University of Toronto, as SSEA in mid-September, 1957, Diefenbaker retained personal control over some aspects of foreign affairs, including relations with the Commonwealth.¹⁶ After Smith's sudden death in March, 1959, Diefenbaker again assumed the role until June, when he named Howard Green as the new minister. Neither of his first two choices as SSEA had any previous experience in foreign affairs, and Green especially could be counted on not to differ on foreign policy matters. In Green's own words: "We had been old friends, and we saw things very much alike."¹⁷

Having a minister other than Diefenbaker did not solve all of DEA's problems. Smith's lack of political experience made him a weak spokesman for

¹⁵ Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. pp. 211-7.

¹⁶ Ibid. p 97.

¹⁷ Interview with Howard Green in: Peter Stursberg, Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained 1956-62. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1975) p. 168.

One of the areas Green and Diefenbaker agreed on was the need for close ties with Britain. Indeed, when Green was named SSEA, Garner described him in a report to the CRO as "almost pathetically well disposed towards Britain" (Inward CRO Telegram 649 from United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canada, 4 June, 1959. PRO DO 35/7011 Canadian Ministerial Appointments 1952-60 [file WES 24/1/3].)

DEA in cabinet. Green, a seasoned politician, was much more effective in presenting DEA's views and the department once again became more influential.¹⁸ His longstanding acquaintance and family links with Robertson made for a substantially different relationship between the USSEA and SSEA than existed with Diefenbaker. In addition, although Diefenbaker relied most heavily on Robinson and Bryce for policy advice, he recognized that he could not master all the details of issues and so relied on officials for technical details.¹⁹ Finally, although the influence of the mandarins was waning, DEA could still exert some influence through other departments and their ministers. Of the two departments otherwise most often involved in Commonwealth relations, Gordon Churchill, minister of industry and trade, was nearly as suspicious of officials as Diefenbaker,²⁰ especially after initial difficulties in preparing trade proposals for the 1957 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meetings immediately after the government assumed power.²¹ Over at Finance, however, Donald Fleming got along very well for the most part with his officials and, so long as new spending was not involved, Finance and DEA officials tended to agree on most issues, especially those dealing with the maintenance and expansion of the multilateral trading system.

Although there was not a cabinet committee dealing with external affairs, ministerial committees were sometimes created for special purposes, such as that dealing with the 1958 Commonwealth trade conference. These provided secondary conduits for DEA's input to Cabinet. In general, Cabinet was much more involved in foreign policy making under Diefenbaker than had been the case under Mackenzie King or St. Laurent, especially if Diefenbaker

¹⁸ Hilliker, The Politicians and the "Personalities". pp.6-7.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

²⁰ Granatstein, The Ottawa Men. pp. 266-7.

²¹ Trevor Lloyd, Canada in World Affairs, 1957-1959. (Toronto: Oxford University for the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1968) p. 65.

needed re-assurance about the domestic implications of policy. Previously, cabinet had merely signalled its concurrence with the policy DEA and Pearson had developed. Now, ministers' advice was solicited and even if Diefenbaker, depending on his mood, could take umbrage at criticism, ministers could state reservations about new initiatives and other departures from past practices in Commonwealth affairs, reservations DEA generally shared.

Thus, during the course of the Diefenbaker government, a modus vivendi emerged. Nevertheless, Diefenbaker never entirely lost his suspicion of DEA. Late in his tenure, in a matter unrelated to Commonwealth issues, for example, officials at DEA advised him against pushing for a resolution condemning 'Soviet colonialism' at the United Nations which both Britain and the United States opposed. Feeling that DEA's advice betrayed a lack of support, Diefenbaker complained that had the resolution been proposed by Paul Martin, at the time the Liberal 'shadow minister' for external affairs, the department would have given its full support.¹ A telling point was that despite Diefenbaker's close involvement with external affairs, by one account, he formally consulted Robertson, the USSEA from 1958 onwards, only twice.² Regardless as to the precision of this number, at the very least it conveys an idea of the prevailing atmosphere in DEA's relations with the prime minister. Nothing could conceal the general relief in DEA with the return of a Liberal government in 1963 and the prospect of greater receptiveness to the department's ideas.

¹PAC MG 30 E163 vol 18. Norman Robertson Papers. Personal Correspondence 1962. Memorandum from OWD (?) to Robertson, 3 July, 1962.

²Peter C. Newman, Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963) p. 252.

The distrust Diefenbaker had towards DEA was all the more ironical given his desire to orient Canadian external policy towards Britain and the Commonwealth. The officials whom Diefenbaker distrusted so much were exceptionally well prepared to work with their British counterparts. In addition to the British and the protestant background of many senior foreign service officers, most had extensive experience of working closely with British officials. Robertson, for example, had spent much of his career alternating between being high commissioner in London and USSEA in Ottawa. If his opposition to British policy over Suez ended his effectiveness as high commissioner at that time, the assessment of him contained in biographical notes prepared by the Commonwealth Relations Office for the British briefs for the 1960 CPMM indicate that British officials' high opinion of him was soon restored. Other officials at the assistant-USSEA level in the late 1950s, such as John Holmes, had also served in London. In the post-war period, the tendency was increasingly towards sending the best and the brightest to Washington and the UN, but, London was still a key post and DEA had an impressive reservoir of contacts there which helped DEA develop its positions regarding Britain and the Commonwealth.

CHAPTER 2: CANADIAN APPROACHES TO THE COMMONWEALTH 1944 – 1956

The underlying pattern of Canadian relations with the Commonwealth and its role in Canadian foreign policy in the decades following the Second World War was established in the first five years following the war. William Lyon Mackenzie King's resolute resistance to Commonwealth centralization and institutionalized cooperation to facilitate this in the mid-1940s differed in tone from the more accommodative stance Louis St. Laurent's government adopted in 1950 and stands in stark contrast to John Diefenbaker's avowed objective of more closely aligning Canadian policy with Britain's in the late 1950s and Lester Pearson's acceptance of a central Commonwealth secretariat in the mid-1960s. Nevertheless, a common thread links the Canadian government attitudes from the premiership of Mackenzie King, through that of St. Laurent, to Diefenbaker and Pearson. Canadian governments desired a flexible Commonwealth which Canada could use when and how it wanted without being constrained in other areas of external activity.

Mackenzie King holds the distinction of being the longest serving prime minister in Commonwealth history. As such, he took part in guiding the Commonwealth through several critical transitions. His efforts to achieve the type of Commonwealth that he believed Canada required seemed at times like a struggle against British governments' efforts to promote a more centralized conception of the Commonwealth. Some writers see Mackenzie King's suspicion of British motives and of any effort at extending or formalizing cooperation as unwarranted paranoia, battles of his own devising against British governments which conceded the match in the 1920s¹. Others

¹For example: E Judith Adams, Commonwealth collaboration in foreign affairs, 1939-1947: the British perspective. (Unpublished PhD thesis, Leeds University, 1981); Denis Judd and Peter Slinn, The Evolution of the Modern Commonwealth 1902 - 80. (London: MacMillan, 1982) and Philip G. Wigley, Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British-Canadian Relations 1917-1926. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1977).

more readily accept that even if the Canadian government persisted in some of its concerns until they become irrelevant, in the late 1940s² they were warranted as Canada strove to ensure that the principles established in the inter-war period were not eroded in practice.³ In the 1940s, the Commonwealth was, after all, experiencing substantial changes in its composition, operation, and in the international environment in which it functioned. There was no way of knowing how it would look once the dust settled. In this context, old battles had to be fought again for old victories to be preserved.

The essence of the struggle remained, before, during and after the war, about where Canadian external policy should be determined. In this, the Commonwealth's principle pre-war role for Mackenzie King was not as an instrument to conduct foreign policy but as a constitutional forum to assert the fact that Canada could indeed have a foreign policy. The most significant milestones were the 1926 Balfour Declaration and the 1931 Statute of Westminster which established the complete independence of the Dominions in practice and in law respectively. Mackenzie King was pro-British, but he was emphatically anti-imperial. He believed that the only way that the British Empire and Commonwealth could continue to exist was as a community of independent states, and to this end was anxious to have Canada's complete and total independence universally recognized. To achieve this, he tenaciously pursued narrowly defined Canadian interests, dismissing any thought of the Commonwealth as an actor the world. His main preoccupation in international affairs was that Canada should be left alone to develop. As a result,

²John W. Holmes, The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order 1943-1957. Volume 2. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1982) p. 165.

³For example: JL Granatstein, A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft 1929-68. (Toronto: Deneau, 1981) pp. 229-33; and John Hilliker, Canada's Department of External Affairs. Volume I: The Early Years, 1909-1946. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University and Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1990) p. 302.

Canada's inter-war external policy, inasmuch as there was such a thing, was quasi-isolationist.

Total isolation was impracticable. Canada relied on trade and Mackenzie King saw participation in the League of Nations as a means to both establish Canada's 'international personality' and to avoid international commitments. As far it could, however, his government minded its own business. A cardinal aim of Canada's inter-war external policy was to avoid international commitments, including those stemming from Canada's Commonwealth relationship. Developing Canada as a nation and preserving national unity were Mackenzie King's overriding policy concerns. Anything which might jeopardize national unity, as he felt an active foreign policy might in the absence of a national consensus bridging both the English and French-speaking populations of Canada, had no place on his policy agenda.

Having gained the point that Commonwealth members were fully independent, Mackenzie King assiduously protected it against any erosion. He continued his inter-war role as the most "awkward fly in the imperial ointment"⁴ through the war and into the mid-1940s. He was not struggling against the Commonwealth tie, but against a particular formulation of it. The outcome of this round, his last, set the pattern for Canadian participation in the Commonwealth under the prime ministers who followed him and guided Canadian involvement in the Commonwealth as it evolved over the next twenty years.

⁴Peter Lyon, "Introduction" in. Lyon, Peter (ed), Britain and Canada. Survey of a Changing Relationship. (London: Frank Cass, 1976) p. xvii.

The Halifax Imbroglio

Mackenzie King, having duly consulted the Canadian Parliament to assert Canadian independence as he moved to support Britain, succeeded in bringing a united Canada into the Second World War a week after Britain. Despite the equality of status enshrined in the Statute of Westminster, the substance of the relationship showed itself to be otherwise - Britain was still the unquestioned leader. The war brought Anglo-Canadian cooperation to new heights, but created situations where Canadian sensitivities could be pricked and suspicions aroused about British intentions. Although the statutory form of the Commonwealth was settled, the manner in which it would operate in the post-war world was not. Mackenzie King, suspecting plots in London to reassert control, remained on guard against the possibility of any encroachment by those advocating a 'common policy' Commonwealth.

A speech in Toronto by Lord Halifax, Britain's ambassador to the United States, on 24 January, 1944, brought these suspicions to a head. In it, even as Halifax asserted that Dominions were free to choose their own paths in international affairs, he left no doubt as to what he considered the responsible course: coordinated Commonwealth foreign and defence policies so that the 'British Commonwealth and Empire' could act as a fourth major power in the post-war world, alongside the United States, the Soviet Union and China.⁵ The speech was a thinly disguised exhortation for the Dominions to subordinate their foreign policies to British leadership in the name of Commonwealth unity. Mackenzie King's reaction to this speech encapsulated his attitude towards the Commonwealth and Canada's place in it. Reading about the speech the following morning, he immediately sensed a 'Tory plot'

⁵Lord Halifax, Speech at the Toronto Board of Trade, Toronto, Ontario, January 24, 1944 (British Information Services, Washington, January 24, 1944). PRO DO 35/1204/75/9 Lord Halifax: Speech at Toronto on 24 January, 1944.

to restore British prestige. With dismay, he resigned himself to "this perpetual struggle to save the Empire despite all that Tories' policies will do..."⁶

His concerns arose not from realistic fears of constitutional regression but from differences over the shape of the modern Commonwealth and the degree of centralization it would have. It was clear where Mackenzie King stood on such issues. He had been expressing the same themes since first assuming the premiership in the 1920s and had an opportunity to express himself on Commonwealth centralization little more than a month earlier following a speech by John Curtin, the Australian prime minister. In a speech on 14 December, 1943, Curtin had called for new mechanisms for greater Commonwealth coordination, including a secretariat of the Imperial Conference in London. Such proposals were anathema to Mackenzie King's concept of Commonwealth. Halifax's speech, while less blatant and detailed than Curtin's, was more provocative. Calling for Commonwealth centralization in Mackenzie King's own backyard was unconscionable.

What he considered Tory imperialism, whether British or Canadian, had always provided Mackenzie King ammunition to wage politics. He was determined to make good use of this opportunity to fight the centralized, 'common policy' concept of the Commonwealth. His first public reaction to Halifax's speech was on 31 January in the House of Commons in the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. In it, he acknowledged the importance of close consultation between Commonwealth members;⁷ he always supported cooperation so long as sovereignty was not infringed. His favourite description of Commonwealth consultation was as a "continuous conference of

⁶William Lyon Mackenzie King Diaries (Transcript), January 25, 1944. PAC MG 26 J13 William Lyon Mackenzie King Papers, fiche T-197 p. 70.

⁷Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. Vol. 82, No. 1 (January 31, 1944) pp. 39-42.

cabinets". With this in mind, he pointed out the difficulty of making decisions at Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meetings (CPMMs) in London where Dominion prime ministers were separated from their cabinets. Cooperation, he believed, was best achieved through existing informal means rather than efforts at creating new formal central machinery. He went on to criticize the underlying premise of a world dominated by four great powers and urged that all peace-loving nations of whatever size should join together after the war to preserve peace. Ruminating on this theme in his diary, he commented:

It opens up the great broad division between centralized and decentralized organization, not only of Empire activities but the larger question of power politics by a few great nations leading inevitably to war against the conception of world co-operation of nations great and small.⁸

His Commonwealth policy, then, was an extension of his views on the organization of the international system. He was anxious that in both there be room for Canada to act (or not act) on its own.

The British government quickly dissociated itself from Halifax's remarks.⁹ It did not, however, consider them to be overly controversial because Halifax had not said anything novel.¹⁰ Churchill even described the speech as "a valuable contribution to study and discussion."¹¹ The mixed signals from London did little to ease Mackenzie King's latent suspicions of Britain. If there was any doubt before, the groundwork was now set for a

⁸William Lyon Mackenzie King Diaries (Transcript), February 2, 1944. PAC MG 26 J13, WLMK Papers, fiche T-197.

⁹Extract from Ministry of Information Press Conference, 27 January, 1944. PRO DO 35/1204/75/9.

¹⁰Extract from Press Conference with Brenden Macken, Minister of Information, 27 January, 1944. PRO DO 35/1204/75/9.

¹¹Hansard extract from 1 February, 1944 accompanying Telegram 298 from Massey to Mackenzie King, 2 February, 1944. PAC MG 26 J1 WLMK Papers: Primary Correspondence Series. Vol 366, Reel C-7053, p. 316795.

showdown between advocates of the 'common policy Commonwealth' and those of the 'consultative Commonwealth'.

Towards the Post-War Commonwealth

Halifax's comments about the Commonwealth occurred within the context of discussions in the Commonwealth about its post-war role and structure. Coincidentally, as the tempest over the Halifax speech was subsiding, Canadian officials were discussing a British memorandum on the subject, a copy of which had been passed to Charles Ritchie, the First Secretary at Canada House, the Canadian High Commission in London. This promoted what could be called the 'Canadian Commonwealth', in contrast with "certain public pronouncements"; Ritchie judged it "a pretty shrewd appraisal of the realities of the situation from the United Kingdom point of view."¹² It conceded that formalizing the Commonwealth was impractical. Britain, therefore, should regard Commonwealth members as fellow states and United Nations members rather than as offspring, let them develop their own policies, and rely on Britain's position as a great power to give it leadership in the Commonwealth.¹³ Ritchie's letter and the British memorandum were widely distributed to DFA officials for comment. The memorandum, of course, centred on British perspectives and policy options, but Canadian officials saw the 'attitude on paper' as indicative that Britain was coming to see things as Canada did.

¹²Charles Ritchie, First Secretary, High Commission in Great Britain to Hume Wrong, Assistant Under-Secretary for External Affairs, February 2, 1944. PAC RG 25 ACC 89-90/029 vol 39 file 62-A(S) part 1. The British Commonwealth (1943-49).

¹³Ibid. Enclosure: Memorandum by Foreign Office on British Commonwealth Relations, 30 November, 1943.

The memorandum was, however, just that. Canadian officials, although considerably less suspicious of British intentions than their prime minister, could only wish that the its ideas were always put into practice.¹⁴ Perhaps the biggest difference between Mackenzie King and his officials was that while he became anxious, officials found British attitudes "irritating".¹⁵ A major irritation was the British assumption of the necessity of British predominance. From the Canadian perspective:

A relative decline in the strength of the U.K. and a relative increase in strength on the part of the Dominions would make equality of function as much a reality as equality of status. Such a situation might render collaboration easier than at present, as there would be less fear in the Dominions that Commonwealth consultation would mean domination from London.¹⁶

This was a significant difference between Britain's 'enlightened' declaratory policy and the Canadian view of Commonwealth. Such differences helped maintain apprehension about Commonwealth machinery among Canadian decision makers.

Concurrent with discussions about Canada's relationship with the Commonwealth, within DEA there was a free-wheeling policy debate to define Canada's place in the post-war international order. The emerging consensus saw Canada as the potential leader of a group of 'middle powers': "states which are important enough to be necessary to the Big Four but not important enough to be accepted as one of the quartet."¹⁷ These 'big little powers'

¹⁴Wrong to Robertson, February 7, 1944. PAC RG 25 ACC 89-90/029 vol 39 file 62-A(S) part 1.

¹⁵Pearson to Wrong, 21 March, 1944. PAC MG 26 N1. LB Pearson Papers. Pre-1958 Correspondence, vol 23. File Commonwealth Relations 1933-48.

¹⁶John W. Holmes, Assistant, Department of External Affairs, to Wrong, February 19, 1944. PAC RG 25 ACC 89-90/029 vol 39 file 62-A(S) part 1.

¹⁷Lester Pearson, Minister-Counsellor, Embassy in United States to Norman Robertson, USSEA, February 1, 1944. PAC MG 26 N1. Lester B. Pearson Papers, Pre-1958 Correspondence Series, vol. 23, Commonwealth Relations (1933-48) file.

or 'little big powers', countries like Canada, would need to look to each other for support. Unlike big powers with responsibility and control or little powers with neither, being in between could produce the worst of both - responsibility with no control. Canada had long opposed this formulation of power relationships in the Commonwealth and wanted to minimize the chance of it being replicated in the international system. To this end, Canada sought an effective voice in post-war international affairs.

This, ultimately, was what Curtin sought for Australia as well. Whereas his proposals implied that an effective voice in the policy of a united Commonwealth was the best means to attain this, the Canadian preference was to secure international order via international organization rather than by creating another superpower. From this difference sprang radically different views of the Commonwealth, one a 'consultative' Commonwealth, and the other a 'common policy' Commonwealth. The 'show down' between these competing views of Commonwealth was to be in May, 1944, at the CPMM in London. Although not reflected in the meeting's agenda, Curtin's speeches were still fresh in the minds of Commonwealth leaders. The Canadian government knew that the only reason that the British government had not requested the subject of an Imperial Conference Secretariat be included on the agenda was the assumption that Curtin himself would raise it.¹⁸ The British government was well aware of the Canadian hesitancy to get involved in any "imperial as opposed to an international organisation,"¹⁹ but was very interested in securing greater Commonwealth cooperation in the post-war world.

¹⁸ Telegram 506 from Frederic Hudd, Acting Canadian High Commissioner in Britain to Robertson, 29 February, 1944. PAC MG 26 13J WLMK Papers, vol 366, reel C-7053, p. 316975.

¹⁹ War Cabinet Committee on Preparations for the Meeting with the Dominion Prime Ministers, Minutes(44) 3rd Meeting, 12 April, 1944. PRO DO 35/1474 Ministerial Committee on Preparations for the Meeting with the Dominion Prime Ministers - Minutes, Agenda, Papers [file WC 60/7].

Gaining Canadian agreement to new machinery was a major concern of the British government as it prepared for the meeting. As the Canadians had been confidentially informed, the British government found Curtin's idea about a Commonwealth secretariat attractive but intended to let Curtin raise the issue.²⁰ Once the issue was raised, if a consensus seemed possible, Lord Cranborne, the Dominions Secretary, would present British proposals, including one for a strictly administrative secretariat to organize meetings and facilitate information exchanges between members.²¹ The British government hoped that Mackenzie King could reconcile himself to a formal organization with such a narrow mandate. Failing this, the British hoped to modify Curtin's suggestions and have Dominion governments attach liaison officials to their high commissions in London to maintain a close contact with British departments. This would provide them with a means of keeping informed of defence and foreign policy during its formative stage.

This proposal assumed that British policy would remain preeminent in the Commonwealth. It did not reflect any notion of equality of function to go along with the equality of constitutional status and was exactly what the Canadians were on guard against. Perhaps the best policy suggestion was contained in a minute to Cranborne from the committee preparing British policy for the CPMM: "We would be wise, particularly in view of Canadian idiosyncrasies, not to fly too high."²²

Once the meetings convened, Mackenzie King's 'idiosyncrasies' in the area of Commonwealth machinery were well displayed. The value of a

²⁰Secretaries notes for the Chairman. [n.d.] PRO DO 35/1474.

²¹Lord Cranbourne, Memorandum "Co-operation in the British Commonwealth" W.P. (44) 210, 18 April, 1944. PRO DO 35/1488, Brief for United Kingdom Ministers in preparation for meeting of Dominion Prime Ministers on Co-operation in the British Commonwealth [file WC 75/32]

²²Committee on Preparing for the Dominions Prime Ministers Meeting, Minute to Lord Cranbourne, 12 February, 1944. PRO DO 35/1474.

'continuing conference of cabinets' was his mantra from the start, especially following a suggestion by Churchill for annual CPMMs. For Mackenzie King, "behind the machinery there was always the assumption of commitments."²³ Since there were none, it was better not to create a misleading facade. Emphasizing regular meetings, he feared, would generate suspicions about commitments and risk having appearances kill the reality. He was, of course, ambivalent about CPMMs because British ministers were in a more advantageous position being near to their officials and being able to consult their cabinet. He constantly stressed that he was unable to make any commitment without conferring with his cabinet, hence his preference for ongoing informal consultation - the 'conference of cabinets'.

Curtin made his anticipated proposal at a session on defence cooperation on 15 May. Earlier that day, Cranborne had made several proposals, including the establishment of a Standing Committee on Strategy and Defence to provide continuity between CPMMs; regular exchanges of staff officers; meetings between staffs; and meetings between ministers of defence.²⁴ Taking his cue from this, Curtin reiterated the ideas from his earlier speech for more centralization in the Commonwealth and institutional machinery to facilitate this.²⁵ He also suggested that the British prime minister meet with Dominion high commissioners once a month, and called for more frequent CPMMs and the initiation of ministerial and official meetings to supplement existing machinery for regular consultation. New Zealand's Peter Fraser and the British ministers present supported the idea, but Mackenzie King stood firm. The meeting only agreed that there be monthly meetings between the British prime minister and the high commissioners. On the rest, Dominion

²³William Lyon Mackenzie King Diaries (Transcript), May 2, 1944. PAC MG 26 J13 WLMK Papers, fiche T-201. p. 416.

²⁴Summary of subjects raised at Prime Ministers Conference, 14th meeting - 15th May, 1944, 3 p.m., John W. Holmes Papers D/I/4 "Commonwealth".

²⁵Ibid.

prime ministers undertook to consult their respective cabinets and communicate the results to the British government.

For all intents and purposes, the issue of centralizing institutions had been laid to rest. The key issue, common policy, remained. The British government was especially keen on defence policy coordination. The Canadian government's response to this was indicative of its approach to Commonwealth policy in general. Its Working Committee on Post-Hostilities Planning considered Canada's post-war defence relations with Britain and the Commonwealth and came out solidly against the types of pan-Commonwealth solutions advocated by proponents of the 'common policy' Commonwealth.²⁶ The Canadian government wanted to maintain defence ties with Britain, but on a bilateral basis, not through the Commonwealth. It, therefore, rejected all the British proposals from the 1944 CPMM except where they advocated continuation of existing practices. The Canadian government deemed these sufficient to ensure necessary consultation between Britain and Canada. Anything else could give outsiders (or insiders) the impression that a power bloc was being created. Canada's most important defence relationship was now with the United States. Britain had a key role in Canadian conceptions of Western defence, but Anglo-American cooperation was much more important for the Canadian government than participation in a Commonwealth defence scheme, which while attractive to Australia, for example, would be most significant in areas far removed from Canada's principle interests.²⁷

²⁶Draft Report by Joint Drafting Group, Working Committee on Post-Hostilities Planning, "Post-War Canadian Defence Relations with the British Commonwealth", January 29, 1945. PAC ACC 89-90/029 vol 19 file 7-CM(s). Defence Cooperation within the Commonwealth - Post-hostilities.

²⁷The Canadian position with respect to defence relationships should not be viewed as incipient continentalism on the part of the Liberal government, as conservative Canadian historians, for example, Donald Creighton have argued. Strategic reliance on the United States reflected both geographic realities and the relative capabilities of possible defence relationships. The Commonwealth could not satisfy Canadian security needs while the United States could. The Canadian government was also reluctant to institutionalize its relationship with the Americans any more than absolutely necessary.

Mackenzie King soon found that British predilections for Commonwealth cohesion were not all a Tory plot. At the next CPMM in 1946, he found himself fighting much the same battles with Clement Attlee's Labour government. The British government was still eager to improve defence consultation and the Canadian government to avoid it. But, unlike at past meetings, Mackenzie King found general agreement with his position, even from the Australians and New Zealanders, who traditionally supported centralized machinery. The British government's quest for enhanced defence cooperation achieved apparent results with an agreed statement of principles on defence policy coordination.²⁸ Yet, the final communiqué of May 23, 1946, was a triumph for the Canadian concept of Commonwealth, endorsing existing institutions and practices. The British government, still ready to embark on centralization if a consensus emerged, had to accept this. The issue was not by any means settled and mechanisms for consultation were again a major subject at the 1948 CPMM.

Although the Permanent Joint Board of Defence remained, most bodies created during the war were allowed to lapse and American desires for a comprehensive defence co-ordination agreement had to be satisfied with a more limited 'executive agreement', the Joint Statement on Defence Co-operation on 12 February, 1947. Even Australia and New Zealand, those most loyal of Commonwealth members, had felt it necessary to reach a much more formal treaty agreement with the United States.

²⁸ By the time the next CPMM was coming up, the hollowness of these undertakings was becoming evident and beginning to irk those on the British side who had hoped for more. The 1946 meeting established machinery for defence co-operation along agreed principles: (i) to ensure co-ordination on defence policy; (ii) provide the maximum degree of co-ordination which the sovereign status of members allowed; (iii) since a centralized system was unacceptable, it was to be based on a looser model. The method chosen was the posting of liaison officers at high commissions. Commonwealth members duly exchanged liaison officers, but to the British government's chagrin, there was little for them to do because there was no political co-ordination on objectives and therefore no basis to start joint planning.

Memorandum "Commonwealth Defence Co-operation", Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee Joint Planning Staff, 3 July, 1948. PRO DO 35/2204 Dominion Prime Ministers' Conference: Machinery for Commonwealth Consultation [file C2610/19].

The New Commonwealth

The attendance of India, Pakistan and Ceylon as full members made the 1948 CPMM the first meeting of the 'new' multiracial Commonwealth. It was also Mackenzie King's last CPMM, although because of his health, Louis St. Laurent took his place at most sessions.²⁹ Some things, however, remained unchanged: the British desire to extend cooperative mechanisms and the Canadian desire to avoid this.

Prior to the meetings, St. Laurent briefed Cabinet on the difficulties that the Canadian delegation expected. Foremost was the support of some Commonwealth members for centralization in the belief that a third great power was needed in the international system and that the Commonwealth could serve this function if consultative institutions were in place to formulate a common foreign policy.³⁰ St. Laurent expected the main advocacy for new central institutions to come from either Australia or New Zealand. In the area of defence relations, however, the British government was still advocating measures totally unacceptable to Canada so that too had to be watched.

²⁹ St. Laurent had de facto authority far beyond his recently resigned ministerial portfolio (SSEA) for representing Canada at the meetings. He had been Mackenzie King's designated successor for some time. Mackenzie King first asked him to be the next leader of the ruling Liberal Party in October 1945, from which point onwards he acted as Acting Prime Minister in Mackenzie King's absence when he was not himself accompanying the Prime Minister. At the time of the Commonwealth meetings, he was already the leader of the Liberal Party having been elected as Mackenzie King's successor on 7 August, 1948, and was only awaiting Mackenzie King's retirement as prime minister. His replacement as Secretary of State for External Affairs, effective September 10, 1948, was Lester Pearson. At the time of the London meetings, Pearson was campaigning for a parliamentary seat in a by-election. St. Laurent had been assisting him, but flew to London when Mackenzie King fell ill.

³⁰ PAC RG 2 vol 2642, reel T-2366. Cabinet Conclusions. 12 October, 1948.

St. Laurent was correct about the British government's yearning for greater institutionalization of Commonwealth defence cooperation but underestimated its attachment to wider policy coordination. The British government wanted to supplement existing consultative mechanisms, especially in economic matters. The CPMMs could promote understanding of common purposes even if few decisions were taken at them, but more was required to ensure "common understanding of common interests or a sense of sustained collaboration in pursuit of common aims."³¹ In other words, more contact, if not supervision, was needed if the Dominions were to decide on their own to behave as the British government thought they ought.

To this end, Attlee introduced a series of proposals to increase consultation and functional cooperation at the 1948 CPMM. These included instituting issue-specific functional meetings to supplement existing practices and having CPMMs at fixed intervals every two or three years.³² Between CPMMs, ministerial meetings and regional conferences would maintain close contacts between governments. To bridge the interval between these meetings, he suggested holding more meetings between Commonwealth representatives in London and British officials and instituting similar procedures in other Commonwealth capitals. He concluded by suggesting the establishment of a standing body of officials attached to high commissions in London for regular exchanges of information about economic policy.³³ Attlee emphasized that such a body would not formulate a common policy or take decisions. He argued that it would be analogous to existing bodies such as the Sterling Area Statistical Committee which met to review dollar

³¹ Memorandum, "Arrangements for Consultations between Commonwealth Governments". PRO DO 35/2204.

³² P.M.M. (48)7th Meeting. Minutes of the Seventh Meeting, London, 18 October, 1948 p. 3. PRO CAB 133/88 Meeting of Prime Ministers, October 1948. Full record of minutes of meeting and memoranda.

³³ Ibid. p. 4.

expenditure of Sterling Area members. St. Laurent delivered the Canadian response, but regardless of who was at the table, the response was the same, opposition to anything to formalize consultation. The response of other Commonwealth representatives ranged from Fraser, who agreed with the proposals, to Eric Louw, the South African Minister of Mines and Economic Affairs, who bluntly rejected anything that might develop into a permanent organization for Commonwealth cooperation and imply that the Commonwealth was an economic unit. As a compromise, the British proposals, which became known as the 'London proposals', were submitted to the member governments for further consideration before being made public.³⁴

If the Canadian delegation had felt constrained to limit its reservations so as not to appear obstructionist in London, the Canadian government quickly set the record straight about the Canadian position. In early November, Cabinet agreed on the substance of a circular telegram to Commonwealth governments giving the Canadian response to the London Proposals. This made clear the government's satisfaction with the existing flexible system of consultation. While conceding that most of the proposals restated existing practices, Canada expressed apprehension that 'the fact of their being stated formally might create the impression in some quarters that they represented something new or different.'³⁵ In particular, regarding the proposals for foreign and defence ministers' meetings, the Canadian government considered it undesirable to fix timetables for foreign ministers because of the impression it might give that the Commonwealth was being organized to speak with a unified voice in a manner totally unacceptable to Canada.³⁶ A more practical alternative, the Canadian government believed,

³⁴P.M.M. (48)13th Meeting, Minutes of the thirteenth meeting, London, 21 October, 1948. Annex. PRO CAB 133/88.

³⁵PAC RG 2 vol 2642, reel T-2366. Cabinet Conclusions. 5 November, 1948. Annexed text of circular telegram.

³⁶Ibid.

would be to hold meetings as needed. As for meetings of defence ministers, in the Canadian government's view, anything which went beyond existing practices was totally unrealistic. Defence planning was impossible without a political framework and such a framework was unacceptable to Canada.

The Canadian response to the London Proposals was as blunt and unequivocal as it was predictable. The objections that were not raised in London were firmly stated, but doing so created another problem: "if Canada withheld her agreement and merely stated her reservations, the division would become known."³⁷ Not wanting a public split within the Commonwealth, the Canadian government contemplated alternative proposals it could make, such as holding informal meetings of foreign ministers during the United Nations General Assembly. The Canadian government wanted Commonwealth cooperation to remain informal and centred on individual relationships rather than formal and collective ones. Too many conferences would be detrimental in the long run because they did not reflect the reality of the Commonwealth and would only expose this fact. The addition of the newly independent Asian members and the prospect of more members in the future made this point more salient. Mackenzie King believed that as membership expanded and became more heterogeneous, it would become more difficult to forge common Commonwealth policies, and indeed, attempts to do so would only achieve the opposite by generating friction between governments.³⁸

This view of the positive impact, from Mackenzie King's perspective, of more diverse membership was also reflected in his approach to another issue dealt with at the 1948 meetings but not reflected in the final communiqué. This was the continued relationship of Ireland and India to the Commonwealth in the absence of an allegiance to the Crown. In the event, Ireland wanted

³⁷ PAC RG 2 vol 2643, reel T-2366. Cabinet Conclusions. 17 February, 1949.

³⁸ Ibid. October 23, 1948, fiche 261 p. 1057.

all the way out, but the Indian government of Jawaharlal Nehru was anxious to retain India's membership as a republic. St. Laurent and Mackenzie King had at first differed on the importance of common allegiance, but by the time the meeting came, St. Laurent had been converted to Mackenzie King's position. Mackenzie King saw the symbol as secondary to the substance - the Commonwealth was a community of free and independent nations held together by kindred ideas with the Crown simply as an outward symbol. Even if Britain wanted a more united Commonwealth with common foreign and defence policies, no such united entity, in his view, could exist. Forcing symbolic issues endangered the Commonwealth at the expense of a wider vision Mackenzie King was beginning to see for it. This was the need to enable all those once associated with the British Empire to continue to cooperate among themselves in the manichaistic struggle against communism.³⁹

From the beginning of consultation on India's continued membership, Mackenzie King was willing to be flexible.⁴⁰ This reflected his 'larger vision' and his belief in a Commonwealth of individual relationships. Commonwealth ties, especially those with Britain, were important to Canada, and Mackenzie King and the Canadian government did not want these diluted. Therefore, they accepted that a common pattern in Commonwealth relationships, as had previously theoretically existed, might not be possible.⁴¹ Instead, each member would build specific bilateral links from the Commonwealth connection. Insofar as the Crown was concerned, each member could choose the relationship it deemed appropriate while retaining its Commonwealth

³⁹ Ibid. September 8, 1948, fiche 259, p. 862.

⁴⁰ Minute by Sir Norman Brook, Secretary to the Cabinet, 14 August, 1948 "Commonwealth Relationship: Notes of Points raised by Mr. Mackenzie King". PRO CAB 21/1818 Commonwealth Relations (Official) Committee. Future Development of the Commonwealth Relationship (Miscellaneous Papers) 1948-51 (file 10/4/47 part I).

⁴¹ Paper X: Considerations on the Nature of the Commonwealth, 6 October, 1948. PAC RG 25 vol 2285 file S/29/1. Canadian Papers for the Meeting of the Prime Ministers, October, 1948.

membership. In this way, the Crown could be kept out political squabbles and membership would be more likely to grow, reducing the possibility of a British controlled organization.

The modalities of India's continued membership were discussed between Commonwealth governments and were the subject of a special CPMM in April, 1949. At this meeting, a formula was worked out similar to the approach Mackenzie King had advocated. St.Laurent, by then prime minister, and his officials were anxious find a way to accommodate a Indian republic in the Commonwealth while retaining Canada's link to the Crown. They recognized that the independence of the Indian Empire foreshadowed future developments. If a way could be found to keep India in, the chances were much greater that other Asian, and eventually even African, colonies would join on attaining independence. India remaining would also avoid creating the impression that the Commonwealth was a spent, shrinking entity and would inject a new dynamic to it, demonstrating Commonwealth statecraft in the process. Indeed, it affirmed a new purpose for the Commonwealth as a link between the West and the developing countries of Asia.

The Canadian government saw the Indian government's decision to remain in the Commonwealth as a vindication of the Canadian concept of Commonwealth. Commenting on the final outcome in the Canadian House of Commons, Pearson, who had been recruited from the bureaucracy into Cabinet and was now now SSEA, said:

Once again, the commonwealth has proven its ability to adapt to these changing conditions, something I venture to think - there may be disagreement over this - it could not have done if it had, in earlier times, decided to organize its activities in a fixed, formal and centralized manner.⁴²

⁴² Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (1st Session, 21st Parliament, Volume II, November 16, 1949).

The long-standing Canadian approach to Commonwealth organization emerged not as one of two opposing views - a centralized Commonwealth versus a decentralized Commonwealth - but as an intermediate position. The real choices were between centralization and dissolution. The Canadian approach reflected the fact that the government was not prepared to yield control over its foreign or defence policies by committing itself to coordinating them with its Commonwealth partners, under any circumstances, but especially because the Commonwealth was now secondary to the United Nations in Canadian foreign policy, and Canada was much more dependent on the United States than on Britain for economic and military security. It was nonetheless also true that the Commonwealth that was best for Canada was the Commonwealth that was best for the Commonwealth.

Using the New Commonwealth

The activist foreign policy germinating in DPA during the war flowered in the post-war period as Canada's wartime contributions, strong economy and lack of damage or disruption gave it an unprecedented importance in the world. Some wistful backward glances to quasi-isolationism by Mackenzie King notwithstanding, by the mid-1940s greater internal cohesion allowed the government to consider that Canada had reached a "more mature stage where foreign policy [could] be formulated as result primarily of a dispassionate analysis of the foreign situation."⁴³ The change in foreign policy outlook was accentuated first by Mackenzie King's replacement as SSEA by St. Laurent in 1946, and then his replacement as Prime Minister by St. Laurent in November, 1948.

⁴³ Lester Pearson, "Some Thoughts on Canadian External Relations", Statements and Speeches 54/31. (Ottawa, Department of External Affairs, 1954) p. 6.

The new outlook to international involvement meant that as the Cold War developed, there was little question as to whether Canada would take an active role. Even before the Cold War was a reality, its possibility influenced the course of Canadian foreign policy. Apprehensions about, and hopes to forestall, future geopolitical competition partly underlay the Canadian government's strong support for building an effective international security organization throughout the 1940s. In the face of great power competition, however, the United Nations was not up to this task. Henceforth, the Cold War had to be considered in all foreign policy undertakings.⁴⁴

The Canadian government's attitude towards the Commonwealth after Mackenzie King remained the same: unformalized cooperation so long as no constraints were thereby created for the wider realm of Canadian foreign policy. But even if the basic attitude towards the Commonwealth had not changed, other changes, such as the Cold War and the new Canadian foreign policy, were reflected in Canada's Commonwealth relations. The Commonwealth had a role to play in the conduct of the Cold War and this required the maintenance and extension of Commonwealth relationships. The Canadian government was no more prepared to have the Commonwealth act as a unit than it had ever been, particularly if that meant the Commonwealth acting as a buttress for Britain's participation in great power politics. Instead, as prime minister, St. Laurent stated "the building of a new bridge of understanding between the east and the west is of the utmost importance not only for the Commonwealth but for the whole world..."⁴⁵ to thwart the aims

⁴⁴ For a more complete discussion of Canada and the coming of the Cold War than is appropriate here, see: James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1972) and John W. Holmes, The Shaping of the Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order 1943-1957 Volume 1 and 2. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1979 and 1982).

⁴⁵ Louis St. Laurent, "Text of broadcast from London on January 10, 1951. Statements and Speeches 51/1. (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1951).

of world communism. In one giant step, then, not only had the Commonwealth gained a positive role in Canadian foreign policy, but the interests Canada pursued were recast from Mackenzie King's narrow parochial concerns to those of the Western world.

The bridge between 'East' and 'West'⁴⁶ soon became a Commonwealth platitude. 'Bridgemanship' was, nevertheless, important. It gave the Western members the opportunity to work as partners with the Asian members and keep them, if not allied, then at least out of the Soviet bloc. From the Canadian perspective, Canada was ideally situated to preserve this bridge. Britain was saddled with its imperial past and established habits in dealing with Asians. South Africa's racial policies precluded it from playing any role. Australia had to operate under the cloud of its 'White Australia' immigration policy. It was, therefore, for Canada to make the new Commonwealth work. The Canadian government, in turn, benefited from the international education that the contact with Asian members provided. Even in the late 1940s, the Canadian government was still very much a neophyte in international matters. Frequent interaction with their Asian counterparts, gave Canadian leaders and officials a more nuanced perspective on world affairs than would have been the case had they only been in close contact with their Western allies.

The Commonwealth's function as a bridge was implicitly linked to the question of membership. The importance of accommodating recent and anticipated future members in order to make the new Commonwealth work made Canadian officials advocates of flexibility in accommodating new members. In

⁴⁶The use of the 'East' and 'West' reflects the terminology of the imperial past rather than those of the Cold War. Nowadays one would speak of the 'South' and the 'North' when discussing relations between developing countries and industrialized countries. At this time, however, the newly independent countries were in Asia - the 'East' - and the terminology of Kipling and the Empire was only beginning to yield to that of the Cold War.

the one instance where Canadian officials⁴⁷ had expressed doubts about a country's suitability for membership, these reflected reservations about its independence rather than the country itself. The Canadian government had initially hesitated over Ceylon's membership because of doubts as to whether Ceylon was truly independent given the terms of its post-independence defence treaty with Britain, not because of a desire to exclude small countries. It feared that this would "cheapen the currency with respect to Commonwealth membership"⁴⁸ and both cast possible doubts on other members complete independence in the eyes of other members of the international community and make the attainment of Commonwealth membership less valued. The desire not to alienate the Ceylonese government helped persuade the Canadian government to put aside any concerns. The Commonwealth could not, after all, serve Western interests as a bridge to the developing countries of Asia if they were not given membership.

The need not to alienate non-Western members and potential members showed in other aspects of Canada's approach to Commonwealth membership. It led the Canadian government to reject the notion of tiered membership whenever the subject arose. Such a structure would divide the Commonwealth into levels of membership with some countries allowed to participate fully in all aspects of the Commonwealth while others would participate only in specific areas of activity. Canada had opposed this in 1948-9 during discussions about India's status and it did so again in 1953-5 when the

⁴⁷ Mackenzie King wanted no part of talks about Indian or Pakistani membership, seeing it as a British responsibility and any discussions an implicit acceptance of shared responsibility. Privately, however, before they joined, he had reservations about the affect the new members might have on the Commonwealth's character. In any case, Canadian officials engaged in talks with the British behind his back.

⁴⁸ Memorandum: Admission of Ceylon to the British Commonwealth of Nations, 28 October, 1947. PAC RG 25 vol 3440, Notes on Commonwealth and International Affairs - Commonwealth Conference 1947.

British government conducted a study of the future of Commonwealth membership.

The British cabinet committee studying the matter, and the committee of officials working alongside, began with a bias towards a two tiered Commonwealth. Ultimately, however, they accepted the necessity of maintaining the existing convention of progression to independence and full membership in the Commonwealth.⁴⁹ To do otherwise left the Commonwealth vulnerable to 'hostile', that is communist, exploitation.⁵⁰ It was, nevertheless, a reluctant acceptance. British statesmen already bemoaned the reduced intimacy brought about by the introduction of the three Asian members to the various Commonwealth meetings.⁵¹ Further erosion of the intimacy of the Commonwealth relationship with increased membership seemed unavoidable. When they saw the report, the Australian and New Zealand prime ministers shared this concern. But, like the British government, both realized it was the only practical route.⁵² The Canadian government was much more positive. Not being as enthusiastic about Commonwealth unity, the prospect of less cohesion because of growing numbers was not as threatening to Canada. The Commonwealth, no matter how large, would provide a framework for the intimate bilateral relations preferred by Canadian governments. An association of equals had always been central to the Canadian government's conception of the Commonwealth. To serve as a link between the developed and developing world, this would have to continue.

⁴⁹C.(54)307 Commonwealth Membership: Memorandum by Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, 11 October, 1954. PRO CAB 129/71.

⁵⁰CC(54)83, Commonwealth Relations 7 December, 1954. PRO CAB 128/27 part 2.

⁵¹Lord Salisbury, Lord President of the Council, Comments on draft paper on 'Colonial Territories and Commonwealth Membership', March, 1953. PRO DO 35/5056 Future Admission of Colonial Territories to Full Membership of the Commonwealth (1952-4) [file CON 32/40/6 part A].

⁵²C.(55) 43 Commonwealth Membership. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 16 February, 1955. PRO CAB 129/73.

Equality of membership did not mean equality of relationship. All Commonwealth members were theoretically equal to one another, but the intimacy of relations between them varied substantially. Canada, like Britain, differentiated between Commonwealth members in such vital aspects of the working Commonwealth as information exchange. For the Canadian government, it was only naturally that its ties with Britain should be of a different character than with other members. The bilateral relationship in defence and trade were much stronger than Canada's other Commonwealth relationships, much more intimate, for example, than those of the 'Indo-Canadian entente' of the 1950s.⁵³ The Anglo-Canadian relationship was such that Lord Swinton, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, reported Pearson telling him during a visit to Ottawa in October, 1954, that in information exchanges Canada treated Britain "as if we were one of them."⁵⁴ Growing membership, then, would simply mean having to further develop the existing practice of treating individual members on the merits of the importance and intimacy of the particular bilateral relationship.

Bridgemanship lay at the heart of the evaluation of the costs and benefits of Commonwealth membership contained in a review of Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth by DEA in 1951. In this assessment:

the principal advantage to be derived from Commonwealth membership is the broader grasp of world movements which results from constant intercourse with the other members. The close contact with the Asian members is particularly valuable, both in counteracting any tendency to insularity on the part of the Western members and in enabling them to explain their points of view to the Eastern members. Further, the Commonwealth is useful under present circumstances in providing a loose skein which enables Australia and New Zealand to add their strength, in a sense, to the North Atlantic Alliance, even though they are not signatories of the

⁵³ For a description of this relationship from both the Indian and Canadian perspective see: MS Rajan, "The Indo-Canadian Entente", International Journal. (17:4, Autumn 1962) pp. 358-84; and Escott Reid, Envoy to Nehru. (Oxford: Oxford University, 1981).

⁵⁴ C.(54)327 Anglo-Canadian Relations. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 28 October, 1954. PRO CAB 129/71.

North Atlantic Treaty. Moreover, the Commonwealth organization introduces a modification or shading between the United States on the one hand and the rest of the non-Communist world on the other. United States policy at times displays a disturbing tendency to try to break down all links throughout the non-Communist world except those that have their centre in Washington; the United States attitude, on various occasions in the past,⁵⁵ towards the sterling area might be taken as an example of this.

The report also expanded on the role of Commonwealth could have vis-à-vis the United States. It described "the Commonwealth connection... as a useful counterpoise to the one-sided pressure exerted on Canada by the United States".⁵⁶ Canada insisted on handling its bilateral relations with the United States alone, but in the face of a preponderant United States, the Commonwealth could serve as alternate venue for international activity or even a means to influence the United States in matters outside the bilateral relationship when a unilateral effort might fail. In some instances, DEA believed, this was more likely to exert a moderating influence on American behaviour than separate approaches by individual members. The more Canada worked through the Commonwealth, the more valuable it would be in this respect. Because of this, Canada was more willing to collaborate in foreign policy with its Commonwealth partners.

To maximize the Commonwealth's potential as an instrument of foreign policy for Canada - as bridge to the developing world and, if possible, a counterweight to the United States - it had to be a dynamic and influential organization whose activities were seen by those inside and outside it as a meaningful contribution to international affairs. To further this, the Commonwealth would have to be the locus of more activity, including more Canadian activity. More activity meant more cooperation which held the possibility of tighter organization. The Canadian government remained wary

⁵⁵"Canadian Policy with Respect to the Commonwealth", July 26, 1951. PAC RG 25 volume 3441, file 1-1951/3-3A.

⁵⁶Ibid.

of too much coordination, especially any indication that the British government might try to subordinate other members to its policies. Canada continued to reject any effort to create any form of Commonwealth secretariat, council of ministers, or more formal defence commitments, proposals for which still came foreword, although less frequently than previously. It was a matter of the Canadian government being more supportive of efforts at harmonizing independent voices rather than speaking with a single voice. Even this would become more difficult as the already diverse interests and perspectives of Commonwealth members took them in different policy directions. The Canadian government did not oppose this or try to increase pulls towards the Commonwealth to counteract it. Instead, Canada was willing to accept initiatives to 'countervail' its effects. These compensated for it by means which maintained the Commonwealth's relevance to members without hindering their freedom of action. In this way, the new activist foreign policy brought a more positive interpretation to what was an almost identical declaratory policy with respect to Commonwealth cooperation on foreign policy in the 1940s.⁵⁷

Patterns of Commonwealth Institutional Relationships

An effective Commonwealth required linkages beyond the ties of history and sentiment. Thus, despite Canadian resistance to formal Commonwealth organization, the Commonwealth of the early 1950s possessed an intricate institutional network. This consisted of formal and informal patterns of interaction, including regular contacts between both leaders and bureaucracies, and permanent organizational structures. When used, these could produce extremely close consultation between the various members.

⁵⁷For a more extensive discussion of British and Canadian consultation and co-operation on foreign policy, see: Adams, Commonwealth collaboration in foreign affairs, 1939-1947.

There was a long-standing principle that Commonwealth membership carried with it the obligation to consider each others' interests in developing policy and to give advance notice of any action which would affect other members so as to allow them to give their views.⁵⁸ This was done informally through constant exchanges of telegrams between governments and the exchange of high commissioners. High commissioners met regularly, especially in London, to exchange information and enable their governments to keep abreast of one another's views on issues of mutual concern.

The Commonwealth also possessed a more formal organizational network.⁵⁹ The Commonwealth itself formed an organization. It lacked a formal charter except, perhaps, in the manner of 'common law' built on precedent and practice, but it possessed the key functional attributes of any other international organization. Most critically, it had identifiable members and a system of regular, established interaction between them. It also had a network of institutions: structures through which the system's functions were performed. The most important of these institutions were the CPMMs, inaugurated in 1944, superceding the Imperial Conferences held between 1911 and 1937 and their antecedent Colonial Conferences. These were informal meetings held periodically with no formal agenda; although there was prior agreement as to the topics to be discussed. Not intended to make decisions, CPMMs offered an opportunity for the prime ministers of independent Commonwealth members to discuss matters of common concern and seek what agreement they could.

⁵⁸ Memorandum W6717G: Present Nature of Commonwealth Relationship - 1947. PRO FO 371/65588 Consideration of the Future Structure of the British Commonwealth.

⁵⁹ For a contemporary description of Commonwealth institutions, see: J. Heather Harvey, Consultation and Co-operation in the British Commonwealth. Part I. (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1949).

In addition to the CPMMs, there was a range of specialist conferences. Among these were: the Commonwealth Forestry Conference, the Commonwealth Scientific Official Conference, the Commonwealth Survey Officers' Conference; the Commonwealth Conference of Meteorologists; the Conference of Commonwealth Statisticians, the Commonwealth Defence Science Conference, and the Commonwealth Conference on Clothing and General Stores. Many of these had standing bodies associated with them to provide continuity between conferences. These included: the Standing Committee on Commonwealth Forestry, the Commonwealth Joint Services Committee, and the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Defence Science. From time to time a Commonwealth conference or CPMM would authorize the establishment of functional bodies to fulfill specific needs. The years between 1911 and the early 1930s were especially prolific in this regard. Among the bodies established in this period were those which became⁶⁰: the Commonwealth Shipping Committee, the Commonwealth Economic Committee (CEC), the Commonwealth Communications Council, the Commonwealth Institute, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux (CAB). This last encompassed eleven bureaux, all but one pre-dating the Second World War, and two institutes.

During the war more bodies were added in anticipation of needs for post-war cooperation. The Commonwealth Air Transport Council (CATC) and the Commonwealth and Empire Radio for Civil Aviation organization were established in 1944; although the former absorbed the latter in 1947. In 1945, the CATC spawned the Committee for Air Navigation and Ground Organization and in 1946 a regional South Pacific Air Transport Council was formed. Canada did not join this last body until 1948. Another post-war body was the Sterling Area Statistical Committee. It was formed in 1947 by

⁶⁰All started out as 'Imperial' committees, councils, etc. but at some time or another in the post-war era became 'Commonwealth' bodies. Some had other elements of their names modernized to reflect the changing world.

the British Treasury as a forum for Sterling Area Commonwealth countries to exchange information on financial developments affecting their countries. Canada was not a member but participated as an observer. Finally, although not considering them a 'Commonwealth organization' because no authority had been given their establishment, Canada cooperated in the Commonwealth Scientific Liaison Offices.⁶¹

The Canadian government did not, then, rule out participation in formal Commonwealth organizations. Several of them even had secretariats. However, participation was restricted to functional bodies of a technical nature. Even here there was a marked preference for wider multilateral cooperation and Canada was careful to ensure that Commonwealth bodies were used only where appropriate. In civil aeronautics, for example, the Commonwealth organizations dealt with routes that were very important to Commonwealth countries, but of relatively minor importance to international civil aviation in general. The Commonwealth bodies, in this way, complemented the work of the International Civil Aviation Organization, the counterpart body in the United Nations system, but did not duplicate its activities. The Canadian government vigilantly ensured that Commonwealth bodies did not encroach on the functions of broader multilateral agencies.

Extending technical cooperation to policy, particularly in areas such as defence, foreign, or economic policy remained unacceptable to the Canadian government. When attempts were made to extend functional technical cooperation into policy coordination, the Canadian government dug in its heels. This resistance to 'creeping policy discussions' can be seen in the evolution of the Commonwealth Liaison Committee (CLC) in the late 1940s. The

⁶¹Memorandum: Canadian Participation in Commonwealth Organizations of an Economic, Social, or Cultural Nature. PAC RG 25 86-7/159 vol 30, file 6133-F-40 part 1. Canadian Participation in Commonwealth Organizations of an Economic, Social, or Cultural Nature.

CLC was established at the May, 1948, CPMM under the name European Recovery Programme Commonwealth Liaison Committee to supplement existing information channels to keep Commonwealth governments in touch with developments in the European Recovery Programme. Although the Canadian government was more deeply involved in the developments in Europe than other Commonwealth governments, and thus less in need of the additional information conduit, this development was not itself objectionable. The Commonwealth finance ministers meeting in July, 1949, shortened the Committee's name and expanded its mandate to allow it to serve as a forum to discuss other economic problems as well. As it was limited to information exchange and primarily involved with trying to solve the problems of the Sterling Area, which the Canadian government was anxious to help sort out since it hoped this would result in fewer trade restrictions on dollar area imports, Canada countenanced this change.

Problems arose when the CLC, acting on its new mandate, circulated a questionnaire requesting detailed information on Canada's balance of payments. Canada was a creditor of the Sterling Area, not a member, and DEA balked at divulging the information. There was some merit to the exercise since statistics showing the overall current account position of Sterling Area members might encourage more discipline among its members. If providing Canadian information could help this, that was desirable. But there was a danger that providing such detailed information on Canada's balance of payments could be used as a handle for future attempts to seek Canadian financial assistance for the Sterling Area.⁶² Moreover, some of the specific information requested was so confidential that it had not yet even been shown to the British government with whom the Canadian government had particularly intimate bilateral channels. Preferring to remain in the CLC

⁶²USSEA to Deputy Minister of Finance, 15 December, 1949. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/159 vol 16 file 4901-M-40 part 2. Commonwealth Liaison Committee - Correspondence (1949-50).

because of its utility as an information source on the Sterling Area, as a compromise, Canadian officials allowed the CLC to receive statistics for past years, but not forecasts.⁶³ Obviously, there was a level of discussion beyond which the Canadian government was unprepared to go. At a certain point, the revelation of extremely detailed information led naturally to policy discussions which could easily lead to policy coordination.

The Canadian government was determined to ensure that institutional accretion did not provide the cohesion to turn the Commonwealth or Sterling Area into an economic bloc. Canada wanted Sterling Area countries, especially Britain, to participate fully in the multilateral trading system and not insultate itself behind currency restrictions and exchange controls. Intra-Commonwealth trade also made use of preferences based on the 1932 Ottawa Agreements. The Canadian government was prepared to assist Commonwealth members resist American efforts in international trade negotiations to eliminate preferences, but rather than wanting them protected entirely, urged fellow members to consider preferential margins negotiable at the trade talks.⁶⁴ As late as the 1952 Commonwealth Economic Conference, however, the British government, still seemed to retain some interest in developing Commonwealth trade as the solution to Britain's economic problems. To the Canadian government's alarm, Britain even flirted with the idea of an Empire or Commonwealth Customs Union in the autumn of 1947 in preference to a European trading arrangement.⁶⁵ For Canada this was unthinkable. The Canadian government remained firmly committed to freeing multilateral trade, not to revamping Commonwealth trade.

⁶³ JE Coyne, Deputy Governor, Bank of Canada, to AFW Plumptre, Economic Advisor, DEA, 23 February, 1950. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/159 vol 16 file 4901-M-40 part 2.

⁶⁴ PAC RG 2 vol 2640 reel T-2365. Cabinet Conclusions. 13 February, 1947.

⁶⁵ Memorandum: European Customs Union, October 20, 1947. PAC RG 25 vol 3440 file 1-1947/10. Notes on Commonwealth and International Affairs - Commonwealth Conferences 1947.

The Canadian government was willing to do what it could to help the British economy. Canada's post-war loans to Britain were proportionally larger than those from the United States. Canada also voluntarily relinquished its Commonwealth preferences in the British markets in 1948. The Canadian government was even prepared to take institutional action. To encourage Canada-Britain trade and otherwise smooth over bumps in the economic relationship that Britain's currency restrictions produced, the Canadian government went along with British requests to create bilateral machinery in the form of the United Kingdom-Canada Continuing Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs (UKCCC). Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed the UKCCC during a visit to Ottawa in September, 1948. The Canadian government was at first unenthusiastic about the idea. Bilateral machinery was preferable to Commonwealth machinery, but there the possibility existed that the British government wanted to tie Canada more closely to British economic policy. On the other hand, the Canadian government could not reasonably refuse the British suggestion, especially in view of the numerous joint bodies with the United States that had been created since the end of the war, including an analogous economic body at the ministerial level.⁶⁶ The Canadian government feared that the British government expected too much from such a committee, but concluded that it could do no harm and might even do some good.

The two sides quickly agreed on the terms of reference for the committee. It was to be composed of senior officials from each party, meeting alternately in the capital of one with the sessions chaired by the high commissioner of the other. The British government was still the more eager partner and pressed for an early meeting. The first meeting was held

⁶⁶ Memorandum by Arnold Heeney, Secretary to the Cabinet for Acting Prime Minister St. Laurent Re: Proposals for Joint U.K.-Canada Committee on Trade Matters, 23 September, 1948. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/159 box 54 file 10364-40 part 1. United Kingdom-Canada Continuing Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs (1948-1951).

at the end of January, 1949, in London. To their surprise, the Canadian officials found it a useful exercise. Far from being only a conduit to transmit British requests for assistance or suggestions to modify Canadian policy to harmonize it with British policy, they felt that the meeting had left British officials with a better appreciation of the Canadian point of view.⁶⁷ The British remained more committed to the meetings than the Canadians, but at least the Canadians were willing to sit down in a regular forum. Commonwealth meetings were noted for being open and frank, but in the bilateral setting, the Canadians would be worrying less about form and more about the business at hand.

Although it was a British initiative, the UKCCC epitomized the Canadian view of Commonwealth. The UKCCC was not a Commonwealth body itself, but it focused on an individual bilateral relationship which the Canadian government saw as the core of the Commonwealth. These individual relationships held the Commonwealth together, not collective policy which was increasingly difficult to attain in the new multi-racial Commonwealth of independently acting members, even if it was desirable.

The Early 1950s: A More Accommodative Canada

Structure was needed if Canada or any other member was to effectively employ the Commonwealth as an instrument of foreign policy. Some already existed, and if more was appropriate, it would be judged on practical, functional grounds. The reverse was also true. Any consideration of new machinery, would have to include reassessing the utility of retaining the old where it existed. The evolution of the Canadian government's attitude to the

⁶⁷ RP Bower, Commercial Secretary, High Commission in London, to Max Mackenzie, Deputy Minister, Department of Trade and Commerce, 25 January, 1949. PAC RG 20 vol 1938 file 20-117-1 part 1. United Kingdom-Canada Joint Committee on Trade. General.

Commonwealth inevitably was reflected in its approach to Commonwealth institutions whether creating Commonwealth organizations or calling of conferences. The change was not radical. It merely brought the same approach to Commonwealth machinery that was applied to other international organizations. The Commonwealth, then, had become more like 'just another' international organization, an instrument in the Canadian government's repertoire for addressing the variety of foreign policy issues it now faced as it took an active role in the international community.

The Canadian government remained opposed to Commonwealth machinery for its own sake or to anything that would duplicate machinery elsewhere.⁶⁸ Some Commonwealth bodies seemed suitable targets in terms of limiting the proliferation of international institutions, thereby limiting Canadian expenditure on them and reflecting the Commonwealth's specialized role in Canadian foreign policy. One such institution was the CEC. It seemed expendable because of the many other international economic bodies and the fact that it focused on economic issues which were of secondary importance to Canada in its Commonwealth relations. But there were other factors to consider, especially the political significance which might be attached to a Canadian withdrawal from the Committee.⁶⁹ It would be the first time Canada would have refused to participate in a Commonwealth body not confined to the Sterling Area and could be interpreted as coolness towards the Commonwealth. The consensus among officials from the federal departments most concerned

⁶⁸ Despite Canada's enthusiasm for joining international bodies, this attitude to superfluous institutionalization was not just in respect to the Commonwealth. It was also evident in Canada's attitude to funding the UN Children's Emergency Fund in 1952 and the creation of the NATO secretariat in 1953. For example see: PAC RG 2 Series A5a vol 2650. Cabinet Conclusions. 28 May, 1952; and Memorandum by Defence Liaison (I) Division, "Some Recent Developments in NATO", February 4, 1953. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 file 50030-40 part 5, NATO General File (October 1951-September 1953).

⁶⁹ Dispatch 4008 from Dana Wilgress, Canadian High Commissioner in Britain to Pearson, September 28, 1951. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/159 Box 37 file 8490-40 part 1. Commonwealth Economic Committee - Reports and Activities (1945-1951).

with the CEC's activities, excluding the Department of Finance, was that the political difficulties and the usefulness of the reports to the Department of Agriculture justified continued membership.⁷⁰ Finance saw the CEC as a waste of money. DEA hoped a general CEC review would solve the problems of a unilateral Canadian withdrawal from the CEC getting the agreement of the Commonwealth countries to abolish it - or failing that, "to restrict its activities to what [was] really useful."⁷¹ Unfortunately, far from finding that the CEC duplicated activities of other organizations, the review recommended expanding its work. Despite having, along with Britain, to pay the bulk of the CEC's new costs, Canada decided that if other Commonwealth governments were going to support the proposals it would not object.⁷²

The Canadians found themselves compelled to support a measure for which on its intrinsic merit they would have preferred an alternative. Financial expediency was not allowed to drive policy when other considerations spoke against it. The need to make do with what was necessary for the greater peace of the Commonwealth was old hat for the British but was a novelty for Canada. It was a natural outgrowth of the increasing tendency to see the Commonwealth as a positive, if specialized, instrument of foreign policy. Mackenzie King sought primarily to keep the Commonwealth from assuming a form which would obstruct Canada's freedom of action. Now, the Canadian government wanted to use the Commonwealth to pursue Canadian policy. As demonstrated by the CEC review, doing this required tolerance for others' aspirations to use the Commonwealth, even if that meant at times accepting more formal organizations.

⁷⁰ Telegram 1851 from Pearson to Wilgress, October 24, 1951. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/159 Box 37 file 8490-40 part 1.

⁷¹ Telegram 1944 from Pearson to Wilgress, October 31, 1951. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/159 Box 37 file 8490-40 part 1.

⁷² Letter 939 from Robertson to Wilgress, June 16, 1953. PAC RG 19 vol 4921 file 8265-03-1 part 2. Commonwealth Organizations: Commonwealth Economic Committee - General.

In the early 1950s, proposals for increased Commonwealth cooperation and institutions to accomplish this continued to come forward from members. The new, multi-racial Commonwealth introduced a new element to these suggestions. Previously, proposals for increased cooperation or new institutions had come from those seeking greater unity. Now suggestions also started coming forward for mechanisms to assist the economic development of the newer members. At the July, 1949, meeting of Commonwealth finance Ministers, the Pakistani delegation circulated a memorandum on economic development for consideration at the official level. This was passed on to the CLC for study. In essence, the paper was a plea for developed countries of the Commonwealth to assist underdeveloped members. It proposed that a central Commonwealth organization be established to help underdeveloped members prepare plans, set priorities, and translate plans into specific projects. It did not say where the capital for these projects would come from, but the implication was clear that it would come from the developed members.

The Canadian government responded unfavourably to the Pakistani proposal. The most important element of any development scheme was the provision of capital, and Commonwealth countries alone could not adequately do this. A particular objection in this area was that such a scheme would inevitably result in additional pressure on Canada to supply foreign aid funds.⁷³ Without American participation, there was a danger that the developed members of the Commonwealth would over strain themselves trying to assist other members. The result, the Canadian government feared, would further unbalance the disequilibrium between the dollar and sterling areas and magnify the sterling area's reliance on trade restrictions that Canada was already trying to overcome. Finally, much of the scheme, especially its technical assistance provisions, overlapped with United Nations machinery.

⁷³ Deputy Minister of Finance to Heeney, 15 December, 1949. PAC RG 25 ACC86-7/159 vol 16, file 4801-M-40 part 2. Commonwealth Liaison Committee - Correspondence (1949-50).

One of the recommendations of the meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers in Colombo in January, 1950, was to establish a Commonwealth consultative committee to consider the possibility of some form of Commonwealth cooperation in the economic development of South and Southeast Asia. Pearson had to work hard to overcome his cabinet colleagues' reluctance to give money away. Even he and DEA, however, had the same misgivings about what might come out of this exercise as they had over the Pakistani memorandum. At the first meeting of the new Commonwealth Consultative Committee for South and South East Asia in Sydney in May, 1950, for example, the Australians proposed a Commonwealth technical assistance programme. The Canadian delegation had not expected this and asked for instructions. In its response, Cabinet "made it clear that before considering any contribution the Government would wish to have information concerning the way the programme would fit in with U.N. technical assistance."⁷⁴ Thus, with Australian leadership and Canadian foot dragging, the Colombo Plan technical and capital assistance programmes were born.

With both a formal structure and pattern of regular procedures and behaviour, the Plan was a major new 'Commonwealth' institution in an entirely new field of activity. But it was, in the Canadian view, to be a temporary programme. In agreeing to fund the Canadian commitment to the technical assistance aspect of the programme for an initial three years, Cabinet directed that:

Canadian representatives endeavour to have measures taken to ensure that there be no duplication between the work of the Commonwealth Consultative Committee's technical assistance programme and that established by the United Nations and that everything possible be done to merge the two schemes.⁷⁵

⁷⁴PAC RG 2 vol 2645 reel T-2367. Cabinet Conclusions. 18 May, 1950.

⁷⁵PAC RG 2 vol 2645 reel T-2368. Cabinet Conclusions. 12 June, 1950.

By the time of the second meeting of the Consultative Committee in London in September, the Canadian perspective had changed completely. What had changed in the interim was the world; specifically the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June, 1950. The Cold War was getting hotter, and with it the Commonwealth took on a new importance in Canadian foreign policy.

The Korean War accentuated the need to improve economic, political and social conditions in Asia. This had always been implicit in the 'bridge' but the Canadian government now placed great importance on devising a development plan specifically for Asia, and the Commonwealth provided the ideal mechanism to accomplish this with the Colombo Plan initiative. In the new international environment, the Plan's strategic benefits were considerable. The Canadian government considered an important immediate effect would be strengthening 'morale', the will and ability to resist communism, in South and Southeast Asia. It would, St. Laurent thought, be important evidence of a sympathetic attitude towards the countries of the region on the part of the West.⁷⁶

The American participation in the Colombo Plan and its extension to non-Commonwealth countries took it beyond being solely a Commonwealth endeavour but did not bring it any closer to amalgamation with United Nations programmes. Canada's reservations, especially with respect to the Plan's relationship with UN programmes, resurfaced whenever participants considered extending or expanding it. Nevertheless, the Canadian government, desiring good relations with Asian Commonwealth members, invariably agreed to extend funding. The Canadian government was finding that whatever its hesitation over the development and growth of Commonwealth institutions, the importance it attributed to the Commonwealth as an institution itself meant that Canada had to go along if others insisted. What could be called 'negative

⁷⁶PAC RG 2 vol 2646, reel T-2368. Cabinet Conclusions. 29 December, 1950.

concurrence' - agreeing so as not to have to disagree - was a shift from Mackenzie King's steadfast avoidance of new or expanded institutions if it was at all possible. Even in Mackenzie King's time it was not always possible and 'institutional-economy' - finding the minimum institutional structure to solve any problem - was still a feature of Canadian policy.

Canadian attitudes towards Commonwealth institutional development could still be more 'negative' than 'concurrent' when proposals went beyond countervailing cooperation to efforts at greater centralization.

St. Laurent's response to a British suggestion at the 1951 CPMM to establish a Commonwealth organization to deal with raw materials shortages arising from the Korean War illustrates the determination not to obstruct, but to find a positive compromise and affirm the importance of Asian members. He indicated that Canada was concerned to secure proper coordination of the production and distribution of raw materials for purposes not only of defence but also for the raising of living standards in the underdeveloped countries. This, he described as the other aspect of the ideological war.⁷⁷ The Canadian government feared, however, that if still more international bodies were created, there would more risk of inconsistency in their decisions. It gave priority to its NATO commitments and wanted to avoid further commitments which might hamper implementation of NATO policy in the same area. If the proposed new Commonwealth organization were to be set up, the Canadian government hoped it could absorb the remaining functions of several existing Commonwealth committees on economic subjects.

With the Canadian reluctance to accept a new institution, the task of handling raw material supply issues was allocated to the CLC. The British government, still eager to increase the mandate of the CLC, was willing to

⁷⁷P.M.M.(51)8th Meeting, Minutes January 10, 1951. PRO CAB 133/90 Meeting of Prime Ministers, January, 1951. Minutes of Meetings and Memoranda.

settle for this compromise. But rather than coordinating raw materials policy and usage as the British government had contemplated, at Canadian insistence, the CLC would serve only as a forum to exchange information on raw materials. Having successfully restricted the new CLC mandate, the Canadian government warned Canada House to guard against any effort by Britain to use the Committee for more positive functions.⁷⁸ The Canadian government may have acquired a more relaxed attitude to the use of institutional mechanisms in the Commonwealth, but it was not about to let them run rampant and its resistance to broadening the scope of the CLC remained intact. Some compromise was necessary: if Canada was to use the Commonwealth in its foreign policy repertoire, it could not play only a negative role in Commonwealth councils. Nevertheless, the Canadian government remained ready to impose checks on what it saw as efforts to employ the Commonwealth in ways that ran contrary to what Canada saw as appropriate.

This was also evident in another noteworthy example of Commonwealth cooperative action occasioned by the Korean War: the formation of the Commonwealth Division. Its establishment, at the suggestion of the United Kingdom, was formally agreed to on 1 May, 1951. Canadian participation, however, was preconditioned by a higher commitment to both the United States and the United Nations. Cabinet's decision that Canada accept the British proposal if the Unified Command thought it militarily desirable⁷⁹ essentially meant that Canadian participation in the Commonwealth Division was predicated on American acquiescence even though the Canadian military considered that the Canadian brigade in Korea would be safer and more efficient in a Commonwealth Division than if it were placed in an American

⁷⁸ Telegram 327 from Pearson to Wilgress, February 14, 1951. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/160 vol. 40, file 4901-M-40 part 4. Commonwealth Liaison Committee - Correspondence (1950-8).

⁷⁹ PAC RG 2 vol 2646, reel T-2368. Cabinet Conclusions. 8 December, 1950.

division.⁸⁰ The experience of cooperative military action did not presage further defence cooperation. The Canadian government considered the Commonwealth Brigade an administrative convenience only. It rejected outright a British suggestion in August, 1951, for staff talks aimed at eventually redeploying the Commonwealth forces in Korea as a strategic reserve in either South East Asia or the Middle East. The Canadian government did not participate in subsequent talks on the matter between British, Australian and New Zealand representatives.

Successful cooperation in Korea had been facilitated by the similar training and organization of the various elements of the division. However, at the same time that the Canadian government was considering the British proposal to establish the Commonwealth Division, it was also making plans to sell stores of equipment for a British-style division and replace it with equipment for an American-style division.⁸¹ This did not prevent the Canadian army from acquiring British Centurion tanks for the three Canadian divisions being established under the general NATO rearmament stimulated by the Korean War, but the Canadian government clearly did not consider 'Commonwealth-compatibility' the central requirement in recasting its armed forces. Even in the midst of a resurgence of the more cooperative tendency in Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth, some areas of Commonwealth cooperation remained as off-limits as ever.

The evolution in the relative emphasis accorded the conflicting tendencies in the Canadian approach to the Commonwealth that followed the start of the Korean War can also be seen in the response to other proposals for Commonwealth conferences and changes to Commonwealth institutions in the five years before 1956. Such diverse episodes as the Commonwealth Economic

⁸⁰PAC RG 2 vol 2647, reel T-2386. Cabinet Conclusions. 11 April, 1951.

⁸¹PAC RG 2 vol 2647 reel T-2386. Cabinet Conclusions. 21 March, 1951.

Conference in London, in November, 1952, ongoing British efforts to expand the CLC, and the Fifth Commonwealth Conference on General Stores, originally scheduled for January, 1955, but held in February, 1956, show a much more accommodating pattern of behaviour.

In June, 1952, St. Laurent received a message from Churchill suggesting the need for a Commonwealth Economic Conference because of Sterling Area balance of payments difficulties. Balance of payments difficulties had been the subject of a Commonwealth finance ministers meeting in January, 1952, but now, Churchill proposed broadening the discussions to include the whole field of financial and economic policy, including questions relating to international economic institutions such as the IMF, IBRD and GATT. The initial Canadian reaction to the British proposal was unfavourable. The British draft placed too much emphasis on matters outside the Commonwealth and Sterling Area and not enough on developing the internal policies which the Canadian government thought to be of primary importance to finding any real solutions to the problems of the Sterling Area. Worse still, in the Canadian view, it seemed to imply that the conference should aim at creating agreed Commonwealth policies on a range of economic and commercial matters.⁸² The Canadian government also believed it probable that the British government would suggest an increase in Commonwealth and imperial preferences and at least a partial withdrawal from the principles and obligations of the GATT.⁸³ On top of everything else, the British proposal foresaw the participation of colonial territories on what the Canadian government perceived as too equal terms with full Commonwealth members. The combination of full colonial representation with the anticipated objectives

⁸² Telegram 1796, Norman Robertson, Canadian High Commissioner in Britain to Pearson, 20 August, 1952, "Canadian amendments to draft agenda for Commonwealth Economic Conference". PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 file 50123-40 part 1. Commonwealth Economic Conference, London, November, 1952.

⁸³ PAC RG 2 Series A5a, vol 2651, Cabinet Conclusions, 14 August, 1952.

of creating common policy and increasing discriminatory trade practices, led the Canadian government to fear that such a conference would be contrary to Canada's own trading interests and would both "create a poor reaction in the United States, and would look to many Canadians like a revival of the old lion-cub theory of Empire."⁸⁴ In sum, the British proposal appeared to be a retrograde step in terms of the Canadian government's vision of the Commonwealth.

Since the Conference would focus almost exclusively on the problems of the Sterling Area, as a 'dollar' country, Canada, had little incentive to attend. But not attending would create the impression within the Commonwealth and in Canada that Canada's commitment to the Commonwealth was weak. It would also preclude any chance of Canada influencing the outcome. Canadian participation, on the other hand, could help prevent the Commonwealth becoming a trading bloc and direct the discussions towards developing a common, constructive approach to the United States on reforming international economic institutions. By attending, the Canadian government hoped to emulate Canada's performance at the recent finance ministers' meeting, where it helped guide the direction of what were essentially discussions between Sterling Area countries.⁸⁵ The Canadian government sought to portray the economic conference as a development from the finance ministers' meeting, but embracing a wider range of Commonwealth economic problems, including those of trade. This made it less like a new effort at producing a common policy and more amenable to the Canadian objectives of encouraging internal reform within the Sterling Area to provide the basis for eventual convertibility. The underlying Canadian objective was achieving movement towards freer world trade, and the Conference report reflected a

⁸⁴ Telegram 1477, Pearson to Robertson, 25 July, 1952. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 file 50123-40 part 1. Commonwealth Economic Conference, London, November, 1952.

⁸⁵ PAC RG 2 Series A5a, vol 2650, Cabinet Conclusions, 30 June, 1952.

meeting that owed more to Canadian aims than to the initial British message. The idea of creating an economic bloc was disavowed at the beginning of the final communiqué.⁸⁶ Instead, the main focus was on internal measures and there was agreement on the goal of removing trade and exchange restrictions as soon as possible.

The one area where Canada had to compromise was regarding the incessant British desire to expand the scope of the CLC. The Conference agreed to amend the CLC mandate to enable it to serve as a forum for exchanging information on development proposals. Faced with a development oriented proposal which would cost very little, the Canadian government did not want to alienate Asian members simply to block a potential avenue whereby policy discussions might be introduced at the CLC. Even with this minor concession, the Conference demonstrated that the Commonwealth could be used to advance Canadian interests even when Canada's 'Commonwealth' interests, as in trade, were not compelling reasons to participate. Receiving this benefit, however, required participation, even if that participation was predicated on thwarting the objectives of common policy Commonwealth enthusiasts rather than a more positive

The Canadian concession on the CLC turned out to be insignificant. Neither the 1951 effort to expand the CLC's mandate to deal with raw materials, nor the 1952 one had much effect. Thus, in December, 1954, the British government again proposed expanding the CLC's role to include discussion of major policy questions.⁸⁷ At the same time, it suggested wrapping up the Sterling Area Statistical Committee since the gradual relaxing of import controls had made studying trends more important than the

⁸⁶ Commonwealth Economic Conference Final Communiqué. Cmd 8717 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952) p. 2

⁸⁷ Outward CRO Telegram 174 to British High Commissions, 6 December, 1954. PRO DO 35/8346.

exact figures. The remaining statistical functions could be transferred to the CLC which already did similar work.

The Canadian government was not enthusiastic about the proposals, believing that the CLC was an inappropriate body to discuss major economic and financial policy questions. The Canadian government felt that policy questions were better discussed elsewhere where all concerned had recourse to expert advice.⁸⁸ A compromise was worked out whereby the Canadian government would not object if, periodically, individual subjects were suggested for inclusion on the agenda.⁸⁹ Each government would decide the extent of their representative's participation. The Canadians were sanguine about the utility of this, but would not obstruct the committee. Indeed, as convenient, appropriate experts, for example, from the Canadian delegation to GATT, were allowed to attend the CLC if interested. But, if subjects considered inappropriate were discussed, the Canadian representatives, while trying to make as helpful a contribution as possible, were "to ensure that the discussion did not get out of bounds."⁹⁰

The Sterling Area Statistical Committee merged with the CLC in April, 1955, but little else came out of the proposals. Other members, South Africa especially, shared Canada's concerns and were reluctant to have officials regularly discuss policy questions. On another front, however, the first of what were to become an annual series of meetings of Commonwealth finance ministers in conjunction with the yearly meetings of the IMF and IBRD was

⁸⁸Jules Leger, USSEA, to Sir Archibald Nye, High Commissioner to Canada, 30 December, 1954. PRO DO 35/8348.

⁸⁹Nye to Leger, 11 January, 1955. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/160 vol 40 file 4901-M part 4.

⁹⁰Paper XX: Economic Questions. PAC RG 25 vol 2286 file S/29/1. Canadian Papers Prepared for Meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 1955.

held in the autumn of 1954 in Washington. If policy questions were to be discussed, it was to be the politicians who did it.

Compromise with respect to economic policy was much more forthcoming than with respect to defence policy. Canadian defence policy remained an area almost untouched by Commonwealth ties despite the increased tendencies towards Commonwealth cooperation in other areas of Canadian policy. The Canadian government yielded only in minor areas such agreeing to host two defence related Commonwealth conferences in 1956. However, this was specifically calculated to "restore Canada's prestige which [had] suffered in this field by previous refusals".⁹¹ The government continued to reject more substantive military cooperation such as participation in a Commonwealth strategic reserve for Southeast Asia.

The Canadian government was by no means unconcerned with security in Asia. Canadian participation in the Korean War, the 1954 Geneva Conference, and the International Control Commission (ICC) in Indochina all bore testament to this. Neither was it, a founding member of NATO, unwilling to participate in the Cold War alliance system. Instead, it was a matter of fitting the appropriate institutional response, whether it be the UN, ICC or the Commonwealth, to a specific problem, all ultimately directed towards the furtherance of the international order required for Canadian security and prosperity. Although confronting the Soviet Union militarily in Europe, Canada had no historical security involvement in Asia aside from its brief, quixotic experience in Hong Kong in 1941. It therefore avoided the security fixation of others of the old Commonwealth and focused on the issues of the new Commonwealth. This new Commonwealth experience had taught the Canadian government that social and economic institutions respecting the sovereignty

⁹¹Secretary, Principle Supply Officers Committee to Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, 13 November, 1953. PAC RG 25 vol 3800 file 8357-40.

of all participants were more appropriate than military alliances or other institutional responses within the Commonwealth.

Canadian readiness to participate actively in Commonwealth activities, was still tempered by a lingering sense that some elements of the British government (or rather of the Conservative Party) wanted to mis-use the institution. Wariness of British motives, while greatly diminished in the multiracial Commonwealth of the mid-1950s, never disappeared entirely. There was always something to keep residual suspicions from dying away completely whether it be a "silly idea" from Churchill to have the Duke of Edinburgh given the title 'Prince of the Commonwealth',⁹² or more substantive, such as the continuing British desire for Canadian participation in a Commonwealth Southeast Asia strategic reserve. Both arose in conjunction with the 1955 CPMM and both illustrate how small, even trivial episodes, kept arising to remind Canadian statesmen that Mackenzie King's paranoia had not been entirely unprovoked.

Such proposals suggested that sometimes British leaders were inclined to view the Commonwealth as a more traditional instrument of international order, and as a successor to the Empire, not as a new experiment in international relations springing historically from the British Empire. It was, perhaps, easier for the Canadian government to accommodate itself to the new role the Commonwealth could play in its foreign relations. Britain had not received independence from anyone and despite other changes, remained the hub of Commonwealth relations. For Britain, the Commonwealth was still a matter of managing relationships between Britain and Canada, Britain and Australia, Britain and India, just as in the days of Empire and 'Commonwealth and Empire'. It was different, but sometimes not different enough.

⁹² Diary entry, 2 February, 1955. PAC MG 26 N1 Lester B. Pearson Papers. Pre-1958 Series Correspondence, vol. 23. Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference 1955 file.

Along with its composition, the Commonwealth's most valuable role for the Canadian government had been transformed during the post-war period. It was no longer primarily a vehicle to manage Canada's relations with Britain. These were now managed through other channels: their security aspect through NATO and their economic aspect via bilateral mechanisms such as the UKCCC. The Commonwealth's main role for Canada was as a cooperative framework for like-minded Western powers with a shared history to use as a bridge to the developing world. While neither intended nor wielded as an escape from American influence, it was also a useful vehicle to move beyond the North American continent and the friendly, if overwhelming, presence of the United States. But first and foremost, cooperating in the Commonwealth allowed Canada to demonstrate sympathy for the aspirations of new members with the hope that the non-intrusive proximity afforded by broad, regular contacts would keep these countries more favourably disposed towards the West than would otherwise be the case. It was a narrow and specialized role, but in this way, it was integrated into broader Canadian foreign policy objectives at the height of the Cold War and given a use without which the Canadian government would have been less willing to agree to anything which tended to increase the scope of its activities.

Mackenzie King may have left his successor an unconstraining Commonwealth, but there was still a need to develop the modalities, such as the Colombo Plan and limited institutional frameworks, to provide some cohesion. The need for some cohesion to maintain the Commonwealth's utility did not mean that the Canadian government opposed the loosening of ties between members brought about by greater cultural and political diversity among the membership. Instead, it cooperated in maintaining functional links among members and in fostering countervailing institutions and initiatives. These accepted the loosening of ties, but gave members a reason for maintaining the Commonwealth. This pattern, rejecting centralization and

accommodating developments which tended to loosen ties while mitigating this with countervailing actions, characterized Canadian policy in the first decade after the Second World War. When followed, it was to be the key to providing Canadian governments with the flexibility to adapt to the changes in the Commonwealth over the next decade and maintain the Commonwealth as a specialized, if secondary, foreign policy instrument.

CHAPTER 3: 1956

In August, 1955, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden sent a personal note to the prime ministers of Canada, India and Australia about the possibility of holding a CPMM in the spring of 1956. He began: "We may well be approaching an important turning point in international affairs, at which it would be useful for us to take counsel together."¹ The changes to which he alluded were in the realm of super power relations, but he could easily have been talking about the Commonwealth. The year 1956 is invariably portrayed as a pivotal one in Commonwealth history marking the end of one era and the beginning of another. The Suez Crisis is identified as the watershed: it "nearly wrecked the Commonwealth".² While the Commonwealth structure was salvaged, Suez marked a suspension of the principle of consultation³; resulted in a re-evaluation and reduction of the role of the Commonwealth in British policy;⁴ or hastened the process of de-colonization and Britain's decline as a global actor,⁵ making a turn to Europe and away from the Commonwealth inevitable. These evaluations of the importance of Suez range from simply describing its immediate impact to ascribing to it principle causative responsibility for all that went after it. Assessments like the first, do not, however, lead inevitably to those which follow. The

¹Minute from Sir Norman Brook, Cabinet Secretary, to the Prime Minister, 19 August, 1955, cover for: Draft telegram from Prime Minister to United Kingdom High Commissioners in Canada, India and Australia. PRO CAB 21/3084 Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference 1956. General Arrangements [file 9/126].

²Margaret Doxey, "Canada and the Commonwealth 1945-1980", in Paul Painchaud (ed), From Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau: Forty Years of Canadian Diplomacy. (Québec: Université Laval, 1989) p. 199.

³W. David McIntyre, The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and Impact 1869-1971. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1977).

⁴B. Vivekanandan, The Shrinking Circle: The Commonwealth in British Foreign Policy 1945-1974. (Bombay: Somaiya, 1983).

⁵Brian Lapping, End of Empire. (London: Palladin, 1989).

fractures within the Commonwealth brought about by Suez may instead be more properly seen as a reflection rather than a cause of changes in the Commonwealth relationship.⁶

Between 1945 and 1956, the Commonwealth had changed beyond recognition. The process of change had proceeded remarkably smoothly and without being subjected to major 'stress tests' along the way. It had weathered changes in membership and structure, including the sensitive issue of the role of the monarchy. Even conflict between members, both armed (India and Pakistan over Kashmir) and political (India and South Africa over South Africa's racist internal policies), had not threatened its survival. In 1956, however, British military intervention in Egypt shook the Commonwealth to its foundations. For the first time it was so profoundly divided over an issue as to bring the continued membership of some its members into question. The strength and direction of the reactions of the various Commonwealth members to Suez would have come as no revelation to British or Canadian decision-makers who had dealt with their Commonwealth counterparts as the new Commonwealth developed. The Suez Crisis did, however, show the dynamics of the Commonwealth relationship under stress at a time when the Commonwealth was about to undergo a series of dramatic changes.

The 'new' Commonwealth had proven both its ability to change and the need for members to preserve this flexibility. By 1956, its membership, structures and role had changed markedly, but the process of change was not yet complete. The Commonwealth's members faced new, and perhaps even greater, challenges to their cohesion. These came from looming changes in the Commonwealth itself and in Britain, still the leading member. The pending admission of two new members, Malaya and Ghana, signalled the beginning of a

⁶Nicholas Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience. (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1969) p. 348.

new round of membership expansion that resurrected the same questions of membership, structure and role that had been dealt with in the recent past. To this would now be added what was beginning to be, with the advantage of hindsight, a stronger inclination among British policy makers to look towards Europe rather than the Commonwealth. These changes made the Commonwealth less susceptible to British manipulation and the British government less interested in manipulating it. For the Canadian government, they meant that future policy have to give more consideration to ensuring that the Commonwealth did not become so insubstantial as to make it incapable of serving Canadian interests than to guarding against British efforts to direct its development.

Building towards the Future: Next Phase of the Commonwealth - Africa

The ultimate rejection of tiered membership by the British cabinet committee which had recently studied the issue of Commonwealth membership prepared the way for more change within the Commonwealth. Of the two memberships pending in 1956, Malaya's, did not present much novelty. Asian states had been accommodated previously and ongoing military operations by Commonwealth members to suppress a communist insurgency in Malaya was a strong Commonwealth bond. The other anticipated member would add a new dimension to the Commonwealth. The Gold Coast, destined to become independent as Ghana, would be the first Black African member of the Commonwealth.

Apprehensions about negative consequences for the Commonwealth's effectiveness from expanded membership had always been present amongst those who saw the Commonwealth's influence and importance in terms of united

action.⁷ Larger and more diverse membership made public demonstrations of solidarity and cohesion difficult. Admitting African states would include much poorer and weaker, hence less important, states in Commonwealth meetings, with vastly different perspectives on economic, political and social issues and different priorities for action. This 'dilution' of the Commonwealth had concerned the British Cabinet when it considered membership questions in 1954.⁸ Despite the conclusion by the older Commonwealth members that there was no alternative but to allow newly independent states to join as full members, misgivings remained.

South Africa's attitude towards Black African members raised obvious questions. Its racist domestic polices were already the source of tension within the Commonwealth. Having African states as full members could add to this, either from the South African government objecting to the presence of African representatives or from African representatives condemning the South African government. These considerations had been in the fore when JJB Hunt, an official at Earnscliff, the British high commission in Ottawa, had discussed the implications of African members with Paul Bridle, the head of the DEA's Commonwealth Division, in early 1954. The question of an African member was then hypothetical, but Hunt received the impression that it would be out of the question for Canada to side with South Africa against admitting an African state.⁹ Given a choice between retaining South Africa as a

⁷For example: Memorandum CDC(51)10. The Constitutional Development of Colonial Territories. Report of the Joint Colonial Office/Commonwealth Relations Office Working Party, 29 March, 1951. PRO DO 35/2217 Constitutional Development in the Commonwealth: Constitutional Development of Colonial Territories - Their Relations with the Members of the Commonwealth. [file C2535/5].

⁸CC(54)83 "Commonwealth Relations", 7 December, 1954. PRO CAB 128/27 part 2.

⁹Letter 1044/66, JJB Hunt, Secretary, United Kingdom High Commission in Canada, to RC Omerod, CRO, 11 March, 1954. PRO DO 35/5056 Future Admission of Colonial Territories to Full Membership of the Commonwealth [file CON 32/40/6 part A].

member or loosing a new aspirant, the Canadian government would probably be prepared to see South Africa leave. This was consistent with the Canadian view of the Commonwealth as a bridge between the developed and developing world. The Canadian government was not, however, eager to take proactive measures to address the issue. Characteristically, seeing the Commonwealth in a stage of flux, and any analysis of future developments as being no more than a guess, the Canadian government preferred to await developments.¹⁰

Canadian governments were rarely inclined to ponder future Commonwealth development. Doing so gave too much emphasis to formal structure rather than functional utility - the Commonwealth which worked best was the one which evolved spontaneously according to the needs of the situation and vice-versa. Elsewhere, advocates of more Commonwealth structure remained, and not only within the British government. Prior to the 1956 CPMM, Australia's Menzies, in an article contemplating the Commonwealth's future direction, concluded that central machinery was needed to ensure greater cohesion as the Commonwealth changed.¹¹ Such ideas found support within the CRO, but given the realities of the Commonwealth, there was no inclination to formally raise the matter.¹²

Dealing with change as it came rather than trying to anticipate or direct it had always produced satisfactory results for the Canadian government. Proposals for planned development had tended to envision the Commonwealth moving directions Canada did not wish to follow. That is, towards establishing formal defence commitments or a common foreign policy as

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Robert Menzies, "The Ever Changing Commonwealth: II Need for New Forms of Consultation", Times, 12 June, 1956.

¹² Minute from Sir Saville Garner, Deputy Under-Secretary, CRO to IMR MacLennan, Assistant Under-Secretary, CRO, 21 June, 1956. PRO DO 35/5012 The Nature of the Commonwealth: Discussions on Commonwealth Expansion (1955-7) [file CON 18/4 part A].

opposed to the tendency to de-emphasize the links between members as a collectivity and come together only as functionally appropriate. As the Gold Coast's independence approached, the Canadian government moved neither from this attitude towards Commonwealth development, nor from its willingness to accept the new member.

Something that enabled the Canadian government to persist in its laissez-faire approach to the Commonwealth's future direction was the attention that the British government was willing to give it. Because British prestige and power were more closely linked to the Commonwealth than Canada's, British governments were more attentive to the Commonwealth's form and structure. Moreover, Britain's responsibility for the constitutional development of its colonial territories gave it more reason to consider what would happen to them after independence. The Canadian government was adamant that issues of colonial constitutional development, even as they affected potential Commonwealth membership, were entirely a British affair.

British officials agreed that matters concerning dependent territories were exclusively their concern, but they did not always agree that this should be extended to matters concerning the Commonwealth's future form. In March, 1954, in the midst of the British study of the post-independence status in the Commonwealth of colonies, Sir Norman Brook expressed the view that Commonwealth members, especially Canada should accept more responsibility for the Commonwealth. With a hint of exasperation, he commented: "I think we shall have to try to make the Canadians realise that this problem is theirs as well as ours and that they have a duty to give us a hand in getting some solution acceptable by all members of the Commonwealth."¹³ The Canadian government did not change its position on

¹³ Minute from Brook to Sir Percival Liesching, Permanent Under-Secretary, CRO, 4 March, 1954. PRO DO 35/5056.

this, but was willing to help find informal arrangements if problems arose.¹⁴ Without active assistance from the Canadian government, whom the British saw as the most flexible of the 'old' members on issues of form and structure such as membership,¹⁵ definitive consideration of the impact of African membership would have to await the event.

The issue of the Gold Coast's membership arose while the British government was organizing the 1956 CPMM. The Commonwealth, even before its anticipated 'dilution' through expansion was not so cohesive as to handle sharp disagreements between members easily and openly. Anxious not to have a potentially divisive issue discussed at the meeting, the British government wanted it settled beforehand. It first approached the South African government, the most likely source of opposition.¹⁶ There was considerably less opposition from South Africa than expected. With independence inevitable, the South African government agreed that Africa's stability was better served by having the Gold Coast in the Commonwealth.¹⁷ Despite the unexpectedly accommodative South African position, the issue was not settled before the CPMM.

Gold Coast's membership was not included on the CPMM's informal agenda, but it was discussed privately. Eden brought each prime minister up-to-date on the constitutional situation in the Gold Coast and gave the British government's view that upon attaining independence it should be admitted to

¹⁴Hunt to Omerod, 11 March, 1954. PRO DO 35/5056.

¹⁵C.C.M. (54)7 Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 16 June, 1954. PRO CAB 134/786 Cabinet Committee on Commonwealth Membership 1953-1954.

¹⁶C.M. (55) 44(5), "Commonwealth Membership", 1 December, 1955. PRO CAB 128/29.

¹⁷Record of a discussion held in the Prime Minister's room in the House of Commons, Ottawa between Anthony Eden and Louis St.Laurent, on Tuesday, 7th February, 1956. PRO CAB 21/3085 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, June 1956.

the Commonwealth. The Canadian government supported this position, but St.Laurent and Pearson, present both because of the meetings' emphasis on international affairs and because St.Laurent was showing signs of age, did not formally reply while they were in London. Instead, they let their hosts know Canada's response would await Cabinet consideration so that the reply would be authoritative and final.¹⁸ Accordingly, on July 26, the Canadian Cabinet agreed to support the admission of the Gold Coast.¹⁹ When, in January, 1957, the prime minister of the Gold Coast formally requested that as Ghana the country be recognized as a Commonwealth member after independence on 6 March, 1957, this too was accepted.²⁰

Ghana's membership raised two important issues for Commonwealth members. These were: the procedure whereby the Commonwealth decided on expansion and the Commonwealth's future character resulting from changes in its composition. Canadian policy, though not based on a plan of how the Commonwealth should develop, flowed logically from the government's view of the Commonwealth. There was never any question of Canada opposing the application even if it did raise the question as to whether the Commonwealth needed a more formal procedure for admitting new members.²¹ The government realized that to refuse admission would be seen by countries in and outside the Commonwealth as a 'colour-bar'. The result would be a disruptive split between 'old' and 'new' members. The Commonwealth's moral stature would suffer as would its effectiveness as a bridge to the developing world.²²

¹⁸ Minute from Brook to Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, Permanent Under-Secretary, Commonwealth Relations Office, 6 July, 1956. PRO CAB 21/3084 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference 1956. General Arrangements [file 9/126].

¹⁹ PAC RG 2 vol 5775. Cabinet Conclusions, 26 July, 1956.

²⁰ PAC RG 2 vol 1892. Cabinet Conclusions, 31 January, 1957.

²¹ Briefing Paper: Admission to Commonwealth Membership - Gold Coast (Ghana), 6 June, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 85-6/551 vol 3444 file 1-1956/3.

²² Ibid.

The Canadian government also believed that Commonwealth membership would provide a stabilizing influence on the new state through the guidance older members would be in a position to give, even if only by example.²³ As for the desirability of a more formal admissions procedure, the Canadian government, always reluctant to introduce formal procedure to the Commonwealth relationship, preferred to treat the Ghana as a test case, while reserving the right to treat future cases on their individual merit.²⁴

It was unlikely that a Canadian government would ever object to the membership of a former Commonwealth dependency that wished to join. Unlike those in Britain and elsewhere who but a few years previously had accepted the inevitability of expanded membership as an undesirable necessity, the Canadian government saw it as the only course of action consistent with the Commonwealth's continuation as a factor in international relations. Canadian policy, then, sought to maintain the Commonwealth 'bridge' to keep developing states, if not aligned with the West in the Cold War, then assured of the West's benevolence to them.

Building towards the Future in the Caribbean

Africa was not the only part of the world where British colonies were being prepared for independence. Decolonization was incomplete in Asia and had not yet begun in the Caribbean. Here too, in 1956, change loomed. In Asia, Malaya was scheduled for independence in 1957. In the Caribbean, the British West Indies (BWI) were coming together with the objective of collective independence. Prior to independence, Malaya was the locus of one form of Commonwealth cooperation, when Britain, Australia and New Zealand worked together to suppress communist insurgents, and the beneficiary of

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

another, the Colombo Plan. The BWI would need only an assistance scheme. Plans begun in 1956 and 1957 for such a scheme demonstrated a new willingness by the Canadian government to take on Commonwealth responsibilities even if resistance to formal structure remained.

At the British Caribbean Federation Conference in London in February, 1956, the Jamaican delegation circulated a memorandum on regional economic development. The premise of the document was that federation by itself would not prepare the region for independence and that the BWI required an economic development scheme like the Colombo Plan.²⁵ It identified Canada and Britain as the Commonwealth countries with whom talks on the subject should be initiated. Not surprisingly, the Jamaican proposal found general favour at the conference.

The British government was receptive to the idea of a Colombo-type plan for the Caribbean. Since the BWI required post-independence aid beyond what Britain could provide, it made sense to invite Commonwealth and American participation in a regional assistance plan. To this end, the British government sent an aide memoire to the Canadian government early in June, 1956, to ask if Canada would consider "associating" itself with Britain in an assistance programme for the BWI.²⁶ Although the proposal was made first to Canada, the British government hoped eventually to include Australia, New Zealand, and possibly India. However, with the low salience of the region for other Commonwealth countries, it expected that their contributions would be much smaller than for the Colombo Plan.

²⁵ British Caribbean Federation Conference: Economic Development in the Caribbean. Memorandum Prepared by the Jamaica Delegation, 9 February, 1956. PRO DO 35/5369 Canadian Development Aid Assistance to the British Caribbean (1956-7) [file CON 262/351/1 part A]

²⁶ Aide Memoire from the United Kingdom Government, "Economic Assistance for Caribbean Federation", 7 June, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 10420-W1-40 part 1, Canadian Foreign Aid to Other Countries - West Indies (1956).

Jamaica's identification of Canada as the other Commonwealth member most likely to extend significant aid was not based only on economic strength. The region had long-standing ties with Canada's maritime provinces, with whom a trading relationship had thrived for two centuries. Indeed, in a memorandum to Cabinet, Pearson observed that the Caribbean was probably the area within the Commonwealth, aside from Britain, with whom Canada had the strongest ties.²⁷ These ties, in fact, included development assistance. Canada already provided a limited amount of bilateral technical assistance to the Caribbean region, including the BWI, and more via the United Nations. Nevertheless, this was not on anywhere near the scale envisioned by the Jamaican proposal.

Before receiving the British aide memoire, the Canadian government, while aware of the Jamaican proposal, had not acted on the matter. Receipt of the more concrete formulation of the idea stirred the Canadian government to action, prompting the establishment of an interdepartmental working group to study Canada-BWI relations. It covered political and economic relations in general, but the main focus was aid. From the beginning, officials felt that even though it was desirable to increase Canadian aid to the Caribbean region, it should not be done within a Colombo-style framework. An important factor behind this was that DEA was concurrently considering whether to make more use of the UN to channel future Canadian aid. Some officials thought it best, therefore, not to commit to another long-term regional aid programme, especially one directed at a single recipient.²⁸ Canadian officials also hesitated because a Colombo-style structure would be cumbersome to create for a lone recipient. Moreover, a programme directed only at the BWI was thought

²⁷ Memorandum to Cabinet from the SSEA: "Economic Assistance by Canada to the West Indies Federation", 10 April, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 2. Canadian Foreign Aid to Other Countries - West Indies (1957).

²⁸ Telegram 964 from the Canadian High Commissioner in Britain, 19 July, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 1.

unlikely to attract American participation.²⁹ Indeed, it would probably produce the negative result of creating an adverse reaction among states in the region who would be excluded.³⁰ For this reason, the Canadian study broadened its scope to include other British dependencies in the region and Caribbean states, such as the Dominican Republic and Haiti, with significant links to Canada. These links were often via Catholic orders in Quebec, a reminder that Canadian foreign policy had to engage the interests and attachments of all Canadians, not just the relatively pro-Commonwealth ones of those of British descent.

Canadian officials were also unhappy about the multilateral structure implied by the British proposal. Such a structure suggested a long-term commitment of a great deal of money.³¹ More positively, a bilateral programme, would give the Canadian government greater flexibility and control in allocating the type of aid and determining the recipients and yield higher returns with respect to any goodwill generated by the aid.³² Associating the Canadian programme too closely with a British effort held danger that the Canadian contribution would be overshadowed by the British one.³³

Visibility was an important consideration in Canadian evaluations of various options for extending aid. This ruled out such things as making a contribution to the Federation budget and inclined against joint efforts such as a development fund or Colombo-style plan. In early 1957, the balance of

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Arnold Heeney, Ambassador to the United States to Leger, 31 August, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 1.

³¹Memorandum from Leger to Pearson, 12 March, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 2.

³²Telegram 964 from Canadian High Commissioner to Britain, 19 July, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 1.

³³Memorandum from Leger to Pearson, 12 March, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 2.

official opinion tended towards recommending a bilateral programme of finite capital assistance such as the provision of Canadian-made cargo ships for inter-island transportation.³⁴ Canadian officials considered it unlikely that other Commonwealth members would participate in a scheme even if the British government were to approach other them. However, should the unlikely happen, it would be difficult for Canada not to join - negative concurrence still characterized Canadian receptiveness to new Commonwealth institutions. So much more attractive were the benefits of a bilateral programme that even if Canada were to find itself compelled to participate in a joint scheme, it would likely have been on the basis of superficial enthusiasm for a limited programme of technical assistance with the added bonus for all concerned that Canada would also extend a bilateral programme in parallel.³⁵

Other Commonwealth members, as Canadian officials had anticipated, had little enthusiasm for participating in a project which, although laudable, was far removed from their key interests. The absence of wider Commonwealth involvement removed a major source of potential political embarrassment for the Canadian government's desired bilateral route. Canada and Britain, separately, were to be the agents of Commonwealth assistance in the Caribbean. In May, 1957, almost a year after the British request, the Canadian government formally responded, informing the British government that Canada would work directly with the Federation government in establishing a development assistance programme.³⁶ The Canadian government was willing to exchange information in order to facilitate coordination and avoid duplication of effort, but the Canadian programme would be Canadian.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Aide Memoire from the Department of External Affairs: Economic Assistance for the West Indies Federation, 2 May, 1957. PRO DO 35/5369. Also in Aide Memoire to the United Kingdom Government: Economic Assistance for the West Indies Federation, 2 May, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 2.

The preference for extending development assistance to the BWI bilaterally did not reflect a reluctance to participate in Commonwealth activities. Unlike Canada's initial reluctance to participate in the Colombo Plan, there was never any question that it would extend some form of assistance to the BWI. Pearson and his senior officials believed that Canada had to play a larger role in the area as the islands moved towards independence to enhance post-independence stability and to reduce the chance that the United States would fill the vacuum left by Britain.³⁷ Failure to provide economic assistance would, they felt, create the erroneous impression that Canada was indifferent to the BWI and other potential Commonwealth members. The Canadian government was committed to developing the Commonwealth, but not as Britain's understudy. The Canadian programme would, therefore, be within the Commonwealth, but would not be a Commonwealth programme. Even though the British government preferred a more explicitly Commonwealth co-operative solution to BWI aid, the Canadian willingness to accept responsibility was a step towards Brook's wish that the Canadian government see Commonwealth problems as its own and take it upon itself to help find solutions.

The Commonwealth and Keeping Britain Great: 1956

Despite the many changes that had occurred in the constitutional structure of the British Empire and in the Commonwealth, in 1956, Britain remained the keystone of the Commonwealth. With a few exceptions, such as the strong bilateral links between Australia and New Zealand and, to a lesser extent, the ties between Canada and the BWI, the web of Commonwealth relationships existed almost entirely of a series of bilateral relationships between Britain and each of the other member countries. Britain was the only

³⁷ Memorandum from Leger to Pearson, 1 April, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 2. Pearson's concurrence is contained in a pen note in the margin.

member to have a high commission in every other Commonwealth country and was also the only one with a separate bureaucratic structure, the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO), devoted solely to conducting relations with other members. Notwithstanding the absence of formal distinction between members, as the progenitor of the organization, Britain had a different role in it. This role was not only one history had bequeathed to it, but also one which British governments had helped create for themselves.

Faith in the Commonwealth's value to Britain meant that British governments had always been among the most fervent advocates of Commonwealth. While Canadian governments in the post-war period had spent a great deal of effort trying to curb what they saw as excessive and unrealistic British expectations for the Commonwealth, British governments never tired of trying to develop the Commonwealth into a more cohesive force in world affairs. Despite the undoubted foreign policy success that keeping the Commonwealth together constituted, by 1956, the political value to Britain of its *de facto* leadership of the Commonwealth was increasingly difficult to assess. Nevertheless, within the British government, a tendency persisted to see the Commonwealth, while different from the Empire, as a replacement for the Empire rather than a development from it.

Attachment to the Commonwealth's importance for Britain's world status was particularly evident within the CRO. A memorandum on the Commonwealth's future prepared by the CRO for the 1956 CPMM stressed its importance, even as it changed, to Britain's role in the world, stating:

that while for a long period to come the United Kingdom can, in its own right, exercise a great influence as a Power in the world, its authority and influence will continue, in an increasing degree as its rivals grow in strength and power, to derive from its headship

of, or association with, the world-wide group of States that compose the Commonwealth.³⁸

Later that same summer as part of a more general review of Britain's international position in the coming decade, the Commonwealth's role in maintaining Britain's status as a world power was just as emphatically stated:

The position of influence which the U.K seeks to maintain in the world is to a very large extent dependent on the Commonwealth association and the U.K's influence within this association. If our special position in the Commonwealth ceased to exist, our stature in world affairs would be seriously reduced, our economic strength would be greatly weakened and our effective influence would thereafter approximate that of one of the poorer second-class powers.³⁹

The CRO naturally stressed the Commonwealth's importance, but the fact that the British government still considered the Commonwealth worthy of a separate bureaucracy reflected its perceived importance and special character.

Keeping Britain great was an expensive proposition. Maintaining the status of a world power required the economic strength and stability to support all the commitments the status entailed. The British economy had been under constant strain throughout much of the post-war period, facing periodic balance of payments crises, yet governments persisted in bearing the strain of maintaining major defence burdens and acting as a source of capital for the Sterling Area. Even with these efforts, gross investment in Britain had doubled between 1946 and 1954, but by 1956, it was becoming apparent to some within the British government that Britain had to reduce its external

³⁸ Memorandum: The Probable Development of the Commonwealth Over the Next Ten or Fifteen Years, and the General Political And Economic World Pattern Into Which The Commonwealth Would Most Satisfactorily Fit, June 1956 (pages 25-6). PRO CAB 21/3085 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, June, 1956. Preparation of Documents for. [file 9/126/4]

³⁹ Minute from TJ O'Brien, CRO, 28 August, 1956. PRO DO 35/8346 Future of the Commonwealth in the Next Decade. [file EC 49/1]

commitments and focus more attention on its domestic economy.⁴⁰ Moreover, by 1956, American and Canadian post-war economic aid had ended and some would soon have to be repaid. Beyond this looming strain on the balance of payments, an even greater one was in the offing. Britain had commitments to GATT, the IMF, the OEEC and the Commonwealth to end dollar discrimination and make sterling convertible. The British economy, then, would require more trade and an even higher level of domestic investment in the future to maintain Britain's status.

The Commonwealth, through its rough congruency with the Sterling Area, was seen by the government as an important economic asset for Britain. In 1956, it remained the basis of significant trading relationships conducted in sterling rather than dollars. Even though dollar spending by India and South Africa had exacerbated balance of payments crises in the early 1950s, dollar earnings of countries such as Malaya and the Gold Coast remained important to the British economy.⁴¹ The post-1950 strengthening in the British economy relative to its performance between 1947 and 1950 made the Sterling Area's contribution to sterling's position less important,⁴² but the Commonwealth was perceived as an important link in this respect which supported sterling and the British economy.

Something the Commonwealth could not provide was an expanding market for British exports. Although the total population of Commonwealth countries exceeded Western Europe's, much of the potential for trade was illusory. Most of the population was in developing members and many members wanted to

⁴⁰ Memorandum: The Future of Britain in World Affairs, April, 1956. PRO CAB 21/3085.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Peter M. Oppenheimer, "Monetary Movements and the International Position of Sterling", in D.J. Robertson and L.C. Hunter (eds), The British Balance of Payments. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966) pp. 113-4.

develop their own industries. Canada, the richest and most developed member after Britain was a dollar country. Most of the other members were dependent on trade in commodities which had experienced sagging prices since a brief boom during the Korean War. They could not, therefore, provide the same growth potential that was occurring in the increasingly robust and dynamic industrial economies of Western Europe. Much of the Commonwealth's economic importance for Britain, then, was derived from past ties rather than future prospects.

Britain's obvious alternative trading partner was Western Europe. Geographic proximity and the region's comparative wealth suggested a plethora of trading opportunities awaited British industry. With American Marshall Plan assistance, the economies of Western Europe had rapidly recovered from wartime devastation. European governments then set about creating institutions to consolidate and expand trade within the region. In 1952, six members of the OEEC, France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Then, after months of negotiations starting in January, 1955, at a conference in Messina, Italy in June, 1955, they formally agreed to begin talks towards establishing economic and atomic energy communities. British governments had partaken in some parts of these post-war developments, but Britain remained outside the main drive to European integration, economic or otherwise, and faced the possible danger of being excluded from sharing in its benefits should it succeed. That it would succeed, however, was not assured, the Messina proposals were ambitious, and only the year before, four years of effort at creating a European Defence Community had died on the floor of the French National Assembly. Nevertheless, the spring of 1956 found the British

government needing some way to counter the Messina trade initiative with a constructive proposal of its own.⁴³

The British government considered a number of responses to the European challenge and decided on one dubbed 'Plan G'. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Harold Macmillan, presented this Plan to the British Cabinet on 11 September, 1956, and communicated its contents to Commonwealth finance ministers on 15 September, 1956. The Plan proposed a limited free trade agreement among those OEEC countries wishing to join.⁴⁴ The agreement would cover all commodities except agricultural products. Agriculture's exclusion was deemed essential both for the sake of domestic agricultural interests and for 'Commonwealth' reasons.⁴⁵ Trade barriers between participants would gradually be eliminated, but members would retain freedom of action over external tariffs, thereby allowing Britain to give free entry to Commonwealth goods and maintain preferences with respect to countries outside Europe. The British government portrayed it as an outward looking trading bloc and a step towards reducing trade barriers globally.⁴⁶ That it may have been, but it was also a superhuman effort to reconcile the conflicting demands of Europe and the Commonwealth, albeit to Britain's advantage.

Satisfying two such diverse sets of requirements was not easy. The British government argued that an economically strong and politically stable Europe was in Commonwealth members' interest and that Britain's participation

⁴³Minute from DJC Crawley, Assistant Secretary, CRO, to Rumbold, 21 March, 1956. PRO DO 35/7126.

⁴⁴C.P. (56) 208, Plan G. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 11 September, 1956. Annex I: Summary of Plan G. PRO CAB 129/83

⁴⁵Aide Memoire: Summary of Tentative Proposals Her Majesty's Government has Been Considering for a Free Trade Area with Europe, September, 1956. PRO DO 35/5637 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, Washington, 1956: Minutes and Records of Meetings [file EC 537/88/10].

⁴⁶Ibid.

in Europe would ensure both this and continued prosperity for Britain. This in turn would mean more money for the purchase of Commonwealth goods and investment in Commonwealth countries. The contrary position was, however, equally sustainable on the basis that where trade goes, capital investment follows and political interest tends to lean. Even before Commonwealth governments were informed of the Plan's contents, Home warned his cabinet colleagues that Commonwealth countries would likely interpret it as a decision by the British government to identify Britain's future with Europe regardless of what it might say of its desire to maintain strong Commonwealth links.⁴⁷ Getting Commonwealth support for Plan G would, then, be difficult. To ignore the effect of the Plan on the Commonwealth, he believed would have dire results for Britain. He warned his cabinet colleagues:

Plan G could lead to a permanent loosening of the Commonwealth bonds and through that to a weakening of the United Kingdom as a world power, and this is an important consideration we must take into account even if Commonwealth governments do not press it upon us at this stage.⁴⁸

Because of these Commonwealth concerns, Home argued that unless adequate protection for Commonwealth producers and compensation for any lost markets could be arranged so as to gain the support of Commonwealth governments, the Plan should be dropped.

Home's argument against increasing British economic links with Europe rested on two assumptions. These were: that intimate Commonwealth and European links were incompatible; and that British power and importance rested on maintaining the Commonwealth relationship. Countering this argument needed only to deal with one of these: if the first proposition were untrue, then the second would not be affected by ties with Europe; if the

⁴⁷ CP(56) 207, Plan G and the Commonwealth. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. 7 September, 1956. PRO CAB 129/83

⁴⁸ Ibid.

second were untrue, then reducing Commonwealth ties would not harm Britain's world status. Significantly, it was the first proposition that Macmillan choose to undermine, asking rhetorically:

Can we retain the leadership of the Commonwealth world and at the same time seize the leadership of Europe? Would it help us create a new period of British strength and power, or should we be foolishly throwing away what we have?⁴⁹

The answers to the questions were, of course, that European involvement would benefit Britain and was not likely to harm the Commonwealth, although the political and economic impact on the Commonwealth would be difficult to predict.⁵⁰

Even for an advocate of the European option, seemingly, there was no questioning the Commonwealth's value. As if attacking the Commonwealth's value was akin to urging a republican constitution or disestablishing the Church of England, it remained an article of faith. The attention devoted to Commonwealth considerations in the elucidation of major policy proposals, such as Plan G, demonstrated the Commonwealth's perceived importance to British decision makers. Even so, Commonwealth concerns could not block the pursuit of British interests as the government saw them. There was still a danger that Commonwealth objections could make things uncomfortable. Even if they did not, the Commonwealth retained a strong resonance within segments of British society, especially the Conservative Party. There even existed a small group of Conservative parliamentary backbenchers organized as a pro-Commonwealth lobby.⁵¹ The cries of such groups and their allies in the

⁴⁹C.P.(56) 208, Plan G. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 11 September, 1956. PRO CAB 129/83.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹This body was the "Expanding Commonwealth", a group of about 16 Conservative Members of Parliament headed by Patrick Maitland. It sought to develop the Commonwealth as a third force between the United States and Soviet Union and even went so far as to advocate expanding membership to include middle powers with what they considered compatible policies such as

popular press, even if not fatal to the government, were an embarrassment which, like any government, it could do without. To forestall protests from Commonwealth governments that might feed such outbursts, the British government sought to convince Commonwealth members that there was no danger to their economies.

The British government's first opportunity to discuss Plan G with other Commonwealth governments was the September, 1956, meeting of Commonwealth finance ministers in conjunction with the World Bank and IMF meetings. If the discussion within the British government about Plan G's effect on the Commonwealth had reflected the Commonwealth's importance to Britain, then the reaction of the other Commonwealth members conveyed their perceptions of Britain's role in the Commonwealth. The anticipated apprehensions of Commonwealth members about the possible loss of British markets manifested themselves. Britain remained the centre of the Commonwealth in the eyes of most of its members and trade was an important element of that position. The meetings did not, therefore, succeed in getting support for Plan G. They did, however, as the British government had hoped, mute public criticism in Britain.⁵²

For its part, the Canadian government was not particularly alarmed at the prospect of more British involvement in Europe. The Canadian government,

the Scandinavian countries.

"The Expanding Commonwealth", minute, March, 1957. PRO DO 35/5012 The Nature of the Commonwealth: Discussions on Commonwealth Expansion (1955-7) [file CON 18/4 part A]. See also The Expanding Commonwealth. (London: Conservative Political Centre, October, 1956).

⁵² Interdepartmental Committee on External Trade Policy. Minutes of Meeting Held on October 4, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 171 file 12447-40 part 1. European Common Market (Customs Union) and Free Trade Area.

as it had in 1954 when Britain became associated with the ECSC⁵³.
appreciated the broad strategic benefit to the West of an economically strong
and united Western Europe, especially if in the process the multilateral
trading and payments system could thereby be strengthened.⁵⁴ Like other
Commonwealth governments, the Canadians wanted time to study the Plan's
effects. Even though the Canadian government was not predisposed to oppose
the British Plan, it did have some concerns about it. These concerns fell
into two main areas. The first was, naturally, that future export
opportunities to Britain and Europe might either be reduced or, probably a
greater problem, that many people in Canada might fear that they would be
reduced.⁵⁵ A corollary to this was that by cutting Canadian exports across
the Atlantic, Plan G would bring about increased Canadian dependence on the
American market.⁵⁶ The second area of concern was that if the Canadian
government appeared too encouraging in its response to the British proposal,
many in Canada and Britain might feel that the Canadian government did not
care if Britain 'left' the Commonwealth.⁵⁷ That these concerns were
essentially domestic and political rather than economic or diplomatic
underscores the fact that as far as the Canadian government was concerned,
Plan G did not seriously jeopardize key Canadian or Commonwealth interests.

⁵³C.(54)132 United Kingdom Association with the European Coal and Steel
Community: Consultations with the Commonwealth, 6 April, 1954.
PRO CAB 120/67.

⁵⁴F.M.(W)(56) 2nd Meeting. Meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers.
Minutes of a Meeting held in the Canadian Joint Staff Building, Washington,
28 September, 1956. PRO DO 35/5637 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting,
Washington, 1956.

⁵⁵Interdepartmental Committee on External Trade Policy. Minutes of
Meeting Held on October 4, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 171 file 12447-40
part 1.

⁵⁶F.M.(W)(56) 2nd Meeting. Meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers.
Minutes of a Meeting held in the Canadian Joint Staff Building, Washington,
28 September, 1956. PRO DO 35/5637.

⁵⁷Interdepartmental Committee on External Trade Policy. Minutes of
Meeting Held on October 4, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 171 file 12447-40
part 1.

Ultimately much of the Plan was compatible with Canadian objectives for Western solidarity and building the international trading system. Moreover, the Canadian government could hardly deny the British government the same freedom from restrictive Commonwealth ties that it had always asserted.

The initial draft of the Canadian statement on the British proposal said that though the plan would create some problems for Canadian trade, these were not insurmountable so long as the effort to reduce trade barriers did not stop with Europe.⁵⁸ It was not pessimistic, but even so, Pearson advised St.Laurent to ensure the tone would not frighten supporters of Plan G in Britain and "avoid undue alarm" among Canadians who might have "an exaggerated impression" of the scheme's adverse effects.⁵⁹ Pearson's main economic concern was not to say anything to weaken Canada's negotiating position in discussions on the Plan's effect on Canada.⁶⁰ The final text of the Canadian statement contained the same reservations as the first but still welcomed the development.⁶¹

Canada, being less reliant on trade with Britain than any other Commonwealth member, might have been expected to be less apprehensive. The Canadian government, therefore, should have been less likely to confuse national economic concerns with wider Commonwealth ones. Nevertheless, even though Canada's trade with Britain was secondary to that with the United

⁵⁸PAC RG 2 vol 5775. Cabinet Conclusions 1956. 18 October, 1956.

⁵⁹Pearson to St.Laurent, 26 October, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 file 12447-40 part 1.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Memorandum for the Cabinet by RB Bryce, Cabinet Secretary. Revision of proposed statement on European Free Trade Area. Draft proposed statement which might be issued after it has been shown to the U.K. authorities, 31 October, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 171 file 12447-40 part 1.

States,⁶² the government was sensitive to a body of popular opinion that focused the Commonwealth relationship on Britain. The Commonwealth issues raised by the British proposal were twofold: first, how integral were trading relationships to the Commonwealth relationship? And second, how critical to the Commonwealth was it that Britain be its centre and it be central to Britain? As the Canadian example demonstrated, trade ties were bilateral affairs building on, but ancillary to, the Commonwealth relationship. Indeed, Canada's trade with most members was negligible in terms of Canada's total trade, but the Canadian government valued the Commonwealth nonetheless. More important, it seemed, was the perception of Britain. The balance of assumptions on which rested perceptions of Britain's world influence and the Commonwealth's role in it was always precarious and shifting: just as the Commonwealth was changing, Britain was changing. The Commonwealth could neither restrict Britain any more than members such as Canada would allow it to restrict them; nor, as Britain sought to find a long-term remedy to chronic economic difficulties, could the old relationship offer the solutions it once did.

Testing the Commonwealth: The Suez Crisis

At the same time that Commonwealth governments were digesting the implications of Plan G, another, more dramatic, series of events was unfolding in the Middle East. Although the Suez Crisis of October and November, 1956, was not itself a Commonwealth matter, it had a profound effect on the relations between Commonwealth members. The contradictory

⁶²In 1956, for example, 17% by value of all Canadian exports went to Britain, only a portion of which were manufactured goods. This compared with 59% to the United States. The rest of the Commonwealth accounted for about 5% of Canadian exports. Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, External Trade Division. Trade of Canada Volume I: Summary and Analytical Tables - Calendar Years 1966-1968. (Information Canada: Ottawa, April, 1971), "Table 5. Summary of the Trade of Canada with Commonwealth Countries and Other Countries, Fiscal Years 1886-1921 and Calendar Years 1926-1968". p. 26.

tenets of an Anglo-centric Commonwealth and an non-restricting, politically and racially heterogeneous association collided. The result nearly split the Commonwealth between the old members and the new. An exception to this pattern of alignment was Canada which found itself having to work hard to preserve its vision of the Commonwealth.

The Canadian government's opposition to Britain's use of force is sometimes cited as evidence that the Liberal government cared less for British and Commonwealth ties than it did for those with the United States.⁶³ Indeed, it was so accused at the time by the Conservative opposition in Parliament.⁶⁴ Contrary to such charges, the Liberal government cared a great deal about the Commonwealth. Its actions embodied the cooperative tendencies of Canadian policy that sought to employ the Commonwealth as an effective foreign policy instrument. These actions marked it as the only old Commonwealth member worried about the "survival of general Commonwealth goodwill."⁶⁵ Indeed, the Suez Crisis can be seen as the first instance of the Canadian government taking the lead and acting in the best interests of the Commonwealth as a whole,⁶⁶ although Mackenzie King would undoubtedly take issue with this point. More than anything, however, it highlighted, even to the Canadian government, the growing distinction between relations with Britain and relations with the Commonwealth

⁶³ Donald Creighton, The Forked Road: Canada 1939-1957. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976)

⁶⁴ This was a constant refrain during the special parliamentary session in November 1956. It was included in the motion proposed by Earle Rowe, interim leader of the Progressive Conservative Party in response to the opening address which accused the government of: "gratuitous condemnation of the action of the United Kingdom and France" and "have meekly followed the unrealistic policies of the United States". Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. 4th (Special) Session, 22nd Parliament. Volume 1, November 26, 1956, p.18.

⁶⁵ JDB Miller, Britain and the Old Dominions. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966) p. 254.

⁶⁶ Lord Garner of Chiddingly, "Britain and Canada in the 1940s and 1950s" in Lyon (ed) Britain and Canada. p. 98.

The Suez Canal had long been of strategic interest to Britain.⁶⁷ Thus, when Egyptian President Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the nationalization of the Universal Company of the Suez Canal, the canal's operator, on 26 July, 1956, thereby taking control of the canal, the British government viewed the matter extremely seriously. The morning after Nasser's announcement, the British Cabinet resolved "that the government should seek to secure, by the use of force if necessary, the reversal of the decision of the Egyptian government to nationalise the Suez Canal."⁶⁸ Concomitant with its efforts to secure this objective, the British government initiated a process of consultation with other Commonwealth governments to keep them informed of the matter thereby accentuating whatever link existed between the Commonwealth and the Suez question.

There was little chance of a united Commonwealth position emerging from the consultation. It was clear from the outset that not all members shared the British government's sense of outrage. The governments of both Australia and New Zealand shared Britain's concerns over the future of the Suez Canal. The South African government too expressed concern but viewed the matter as being removed from its immediate interests. Among the Asian members, there was considerable sympathy for the nationalist aspirations of the Egyptian government. Sensitivity for the perspective of another developing country meant that the governments of India, Pakistan and Ceylon hesitated to criticize Nasser's action. The stage was set for an old/new split within the Commonwealth.

⁶⁷ For background to the crisis and detailed treatment of the crisis itself, see: David Carlton, Britain and the Suez Crisis. (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988); James Eayrs, The Commonwealth and Suez: A Documentary Survey. (London: Oxford University, 1964); Keith Kyle, Suez. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991); Hugh Thomas, The Suez Affair. Second Edition (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988).

⁶⁸ C.M. (56)54(1), 27 July, 1956. PRO CAB 128/30 Cabinet Memoranda.

The first public reaction by the Canadian government was an answer to a question from the press by Pearson on 27 July. In a guarded reply he said:

While Canada has no share in the ownership of the Suez Canal Company, as a trading nation we have a very real interest in the efficient and non-discriminatory operation of this waterway... We would regret and be concerned about any action which interfered with such operations.⁶⁹

The Progressive Conservative opposition in Parliament denounced this apparent reluctance to condemn Egypt and stand with Britain in a show of 'Commonwealth unity'.⁷⁰ The government, however, had other notions of Commonwealth unity. Pearson was well aware of the sentiment among Asian Commonwealth members and used this to justify the government's measured response.⁷¹ But even more than not wanting to offend the Asian Commonwealth, the Canadian government did not want to inflame the situation. Above all else, it wanted the issue settled peacefully and expeditiously.

Though the Canadian government did not align itself with Britain, it supported British efforts to settle the affair through negotiations. These began with trilateral talks convened in London on 29 July between representatives of the United States, Britain and France. The result of these talks was the decision to hold an international conference between 16 and 23 August in London to discuss means of ensuring the international operation of the Suez Canal. Twenty-four governments were invited to participate of which twenty-two accepted. Of the eight Commonwealth members Canada and South Africa were the only ones not invited. The reason for this was simple: neither was a major user of the canal. The Canadian government

⁶⁹Quoted in The Globe and Mail. (Toronto), 28 July, 1956.

⁷⁰Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. 3rd Session, 22nd Parliament, Volume VII, July 28, 1956, p. 6607.

⁷¹Ibid. 1 August, 1956, p. 6831.

accepted this without complaint.⁷² The matter was remote from Canadian interests, and the government's main concern was preventing the issue becoming something about which it had to worry.

The British and Canadian governments exchanged information and views constantly. The British government would have liked to have Canadian backing for its tough position towards Nasser, but there was one critical area where the two governments' views diverged significantly. Even before Eden publicly announced on 2 August that "certain precautions of a military nature"⁷³ had been taken, differences on this subject were beginning. The possible use of force lay too near to the surface even in Eden's first communication to St. Laurent for Pearson's liking. Were Britain to use force, even as a last resort, Pearson feared that it would only result in Egypt taking the issue to the UN and "that would be bringing the UN into the matter with a vengeance and by the wrong party."⁷⁴ The British government was aware of this divergence. In early August, Sydney Pierce, the Canadian Deputy High Commissioner in London, told Sir Saville Garner, then Deputy Under-Secretary of State in the CRO but soon to go to Canada as high commissioner, privately and personally, but of course duly recorded and reported, that the Canadian government was directly concerned about the use of force as a member of the Commonwealth, NATO and the United Nations, and was worried that any precipitous use of force could split all three organizations.⁷⁵ Such informal discussions about the possible use of force continued through mid-August. Norman Robertson, the Canadian High Commissioner, who was on close

⁷²Inward CRO Telegram 77 from High Commission in Canada, 3 August, 1956. PRO DO 35/6314 Nationalisation of Suez Canal: Consultations with Canada, 1956 [file ME 190/1/1].

⁷³Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. Volume 557, coll. 1607, 2 August, 1956.

⁷⁴Pearson to Robertson, 28 July, 1956. PAC MG 26 N1. LB Pearson Papers. Pre-1958 Correspondence, vol 37.

⁷⁵Minute from Garner to Laithwaite, 7 August, 1956. PRO DO 35/6314

and easy terms both with his minister, Pearson, and with senior British officials, was a vital conduit in these. His opinion, given considerable weight by the CRO, was that Canadian support for the use of force was very unlikely.⁷⁶ Accordingly, the British decided against seeking "a precise definition" of the Canadian government's attitude towards the use of force until Nasser did something which would make Canadian support more likely.⁷⁷

The Canadian government never explicitly ruled out the use of force. In his public statements on the situation, Pearson always called for a peaceful settlement without specifically dealing with the issue of force. This was part of a general reservation of the Canadian position. As the idea for some form of international control of the Canal took shape during the August conference in London, the Canadian government shied away from endorsing that as well. It was not that the idea was antithetical to the Canadian government. Throughout the crisis, it had consistently supported the principle that international institutions were the preferred way of dealing with the problem. Canadian hesitations about the London Conference proposals reflected a preference for: (i) a United Nations solution (ii) that Asian Commonwealth members could support. Just before the London Conference convened, Robertson and Pierce informed the CRO of Canadian inclinations. They argued that Asian countries would feel freer to support some form of international control for the Canal at the United Nations than at a conference in London, boycotted by Egypt, held specifically to secure international control.⁷⁸ The importance with which the Canadian government viewed Asian support was reiterated a few days later when Jules Leger, the

⁷⁶Minute to Prime Minister (serial 84/56), 17 August, 1956. PRO DO 35/6314.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Minute from Rumbold to Home, 15 August, 1956. PRO DO 35/6314.

USSEA, told an official from Earnscliff that the Canadian government would be extremely reluctant to support anything that India opposed.⁷⁹ This was put to the test when, at the conference's conclusion, neither India nor Ceylon endorsed the majority proposals (supported by eighteen of twenty-two participants) calling for the creation of an international operating board for the Canal to be established under the terms of a new Suez Canal Convention.⁸⁰

It was impossible to avoid making a statement on the conference's proposals. After waiting a week, Pearson finally made a public statement. In it he stressed the rights of both the Canal users and Egypt. He did, however, endorse the Conference proposals saying that: "we feel that these proposals are reasonable and satisfactory and deserve our support as the basis for negotiation."⁸¹ Six days later in a secret speech before the North Atlantic Council in Paris, Pearson reiterated this position but also dealt with the issue of force directly. He called for force to be ruled out except as a last resort and then only to be used in accordance with the principles of the United Nations and NATO.⁸² He did not rule force out, but the conditions he set on its use would be difficult to meet.

Almost as soon as the Canadian government finally endorsed the majority proposals of the conference, they were superceded. On 4 September, the American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, revealed a new proposal to the British ambassador in Washington entailing the creation of a Suez Canal

⁷⁹ Telegram 789 from United Kingdom High Commission in Canada to CRO, 20 August, 1956. PRO DO 35/6314.

⁸⁰ Great Britain. The Suez Canal Conference: London, August 2-24. Selected Documents. Cmd 9853 (London: HMSO, 1956) pp. 11-12.

⁸¹ Text of Statement by Lester Pearson, 30 August, 1956. PRO DO 35/6314.

⁸² Text of Speech by Lester Pearson to the North Atlantic Council, Paris, 5 September, 1956. PRO DO 35/6314.

Users' Association to operate the canal under the existing Suez Canal Convention of 1888. Eight days later, the same day that he publicly announced Britain's acceptance of this idea, Eden sent a message to St. Laurent asking for Canadian support. This the Canadian government refused to do, telling the British government that it was not in a position to comment but was studying the proposal.⁸³ Privately, however, it felt that the new proposal would be less palatable to Nasser than the first and, by extension, no more likely to gain support from the Asian Commonwealth.

A second conference was held in London from 19 to 21 September for the eighteen countries supporting the original conference proposals to consider the new plan. Pakistan, the only Asian Commonwealth member endorsing the original scheme, refused to associate itself with the new one. The division among Commonwealth members between old and new was now clearer than ever. Australia and New Zealand were the only Commonwealth members supporting the British government's position. None of the three Asian members endorsed British policy. The South African government was trying to steer clear of the situation and the Canadian government, although apprehensive that force might be used, refused to publicly commit itself either way. It was clear by the end of September, however, from both official and unofficial communications between the British and Canadian governments that there was a growing gulf between them on the issue of how best to handle Suez. Dispatches from Earnscliff, resigned to the "somewhat unsympathetic Canadian attitude",⁸⁴ sought consolation where they could. At a press conference on 28 September, St. Laurent responded to a question about the Canadian government's view of British military activities in the Mediterranean by pointing out that they were not necessarily aggressive in intent but simply

⁸³PAC RG 2 vol 5775. Cabinet Conclusions, 13 September, 1956.

⁸⁴Robert Belgrave, Office of the British High Commissioner, Ottawa, to CS Pickard, Assistant Secretary, CRO, 3 October, 1956. PRO DO 35/6314.

prudent, defensive precautions to protect British subjects should violence erupt. Such was the support the British government's efforts to settle the situation were likely to receive. All that the Canadian government could do to support Britain, it seemed, was to not publicly oppose it.

The situation exploded on 29 October when Israeli forces attacked Egypt. On 30 October, Britain and France issued an ultimatum to Israel⁸⁵ and Egypt⁸⁶ to cease fighting and withdraw their forces ten miles from either side of the Suez Canal. Failure to comply with these terms would result in military intervention by Britain and France to occupy Port Said, Ismailia and Suez to protect the Canal. The Egyptian government rejected the ultimatum and on 31 October, British forces began air operations against Egypt.

The terms of the Anglo-French ultimatum were also communicated to Commonwealth governments. Commonwealth high commissioners in London were told shortly before Eden's informed the House of Commons on the afternoon of 30 October. The near-simultaneous notification of the British Parliament and Commonwealth governments had previously been the consultative norm on major matters during the crisis. This left no time for Commonwealth governments to consider the matter, indicative of the state of 'consultation'. Indeed, Canada House was reduced to having to analyze press content to look for indications of the direction of British policy in the days immediately before this.⁸⁷ In this final instance media technology overtook the consultative

⁸⁵ VR1091/398 Text of Communication handed to the Israeli Chargé d'Affaires by Sir I. Kirkpatrick and M. Pineau at 4:15 PM on October 30. PRO FO 371/121783 Political Relations between Israel and Arab States: Military Consequences, including action by UK and France at Suez.

⁸⁶ VR1091/400 Text of communication handed to the Egyptian Ambassador by Sir I. Kirkpatrick and M. Pineau at 4:30 GMT on October 30. PRO FO 371/121783.

⁸⁷ Memorandum to the SSEA from the USSEA. The Present United Kingdom Position in the Suez Dispute, 27 October, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 91-2/109 box 175 file 50372-40 part 8. Nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt.

process. Robertson was informed just after four o'clock in the afternoon in London (eleven o'clock in the morning in Ottawa). The message reached St. Laurent at five o'clock that afternoon, Ottawa time. Before it did St. Laurent, heard of the ultimatum from a press report.⁸⁸ As Pearson observed in his memoirs, "he was not very pleased about the state of Commonwealth consultations."⁸⁹

More disturbing was the content of the message. The British action was certain to have far reaching effects. It exacerbated an already dangerous crisis in a way which affected Canadian foreign policy interests directly. If the situation in the Middle East had seemed somewhat remote from key Canadian interests at the beginning, it now touched on what were the three most important areas of Canadian foreign policy: the ability of the United Nations to function effectively; the survival of the Commonwealth; and the cohesion of the Anglo-American partnership, and by extension of the Western alliance.

The immediate reaction of the Canadian government was dismay over the British action. Pearson instructed Robertson over the telephone⁹⁰ to convey this and urge the ultimatum's postponement.⁹¹ This first, informal Canadian

⁸⁸ Prime Minister's Personal Telegram T.505/56. CRO Inward Telegram No.1040 from Neil Pritchard, Acting High Commissioner in Canada, 1 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096 Commonwealth Reaction to the Anglo-French Ultimatum to Egypt and Israel.

⁸⁹ Lester Pearson, Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson. Volume 2: 1948-1957. (John A. Munro and Alex I. Inglis, editors) (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1973) p. 238.

⁹⁰ Text of telegram from Pearson to Robertson, 30 October, 1956. PRO FO 371/121788 Political Relations Between Israel and Arab States: Military Consequences, including action by UK France at Suez.

⁹¹ PAC RG 2 vol 5775. Cabinet Conclusions, 31 October, 1956.

response was delivered at a meeting between the Commonwealth Secretary and Commonwealth high commissioners in London on the evening of 30 October.⁹² The formal, written response was delayed as Pearson, St.Laurent and their officials carefully drafted an alternative to the "pretty vigorous answer"⁹³ an angry St.Laurent had produced. When Neil Pritchard, the Acting British High Commissioner went to see Pearson late in the afternoon of 31 October, the response was still not ready, but Pearson conveyed the gist of it to him. Pritchard passed this on to London, reporting the Canadian government's worries as:

- (a) Franco-British action had been launched at a time when the Security Council was seized of the matter.
- (b) The Commonwealth was divided. Canada was alarmed that this situation may decisively divide the Asian Commonwealth and especially India from the rest. And [Pearson] could not even say that Britain has Canada's support.
- (c) The effect on United Kingdom-United States relations...⁹⁴

Nevertheless, while the Canadian government opposed British actions and regretted that they diverted attention from Soviet actions in Hungary, Pearson indicated that they were not angry at the British government for what it had done. France was another matter. The Canadian government felt that the French had secretly arranged things with Israel and taken the rest of the world, including Britain, by surprise.⁹⁵ Of course, if France had tricked Britain into a bad policy decision, it was only possible because of joint military cooperation beforehand. Nevertheless, the Canadian government's attitude all along seems to have been one of wanting to help Britain out of an unfortunate mistake.

⁹²Outward CRO Telegram W.426 to High Commissioners, 31 October, 1956. PRO FO 371/121788.

⁹³Pearson, Mike. Volume 2. p. 238.

⁹⁴CRO Inward Telegram No.1037 from Pritchard, 1 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

⁹⁵Ibid.

The Canadian Cabinet met the next morning to give final agreement to the text of the Canadian reply to Eden's message of 30 October. The content corresponded with what Pearson said to Pritchard the previous evening and Robertson had communicated informally to British officials in London. While the breach between Britain and the United States was of paramount importance, St. Laurent was also emphatic about the danger to the Commonwealth, saying:

There is also the danger - and I am sure that you are even more conscious of this than we are here - of a serious division within the Commonwealth in regard to your action, which will prejudice the unity of our association. The statement which the government of India issued this morning is significant evidence of this danger.⁹⁶

The meeting also discussed reports from Canada House that British officials were increasingly alarmed at the direction of events. That being the case:

it might be that the U.K. government would soon welcome a proposal calling for the cessation of hostilities, the convening of a widely-based conference on Middle Eastern matters and, in the interim, the provision of substantial police forces stationed on the Israeli-Arab borders to keep peace.⁹⁷

Accordingly, Pearson left for the United Nations in New York that afternoon. There, the Canadian objective of finding "a workable solution of Middle-Eastern affairs with a minimum of damage to the unity of the Commonwealth and Western Alliance",⁹⁸ ran into the problem that the British government seemed not to want help. To the Canadian government's dismay, Anglo-French ground operations began on 5 November. The depth of this feeling was evident when Pritchard presented Eden's message informing St. Laurent of the impending landings late in the evening of 4 November. He reported that St. Laurent:

⁹⁶ Prime Minister's Personal Telegram T.505/56. CRO Inward Telegram No.1040 from Pritchard, 1 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

⁹⁷ PAC RG 2 vol 5775. Cabinet Conclusions, 1 November, 1956.

⁹⁸ Message from St. Laurent to Eden, Inward CRO Telegram 1073 from Pritchard, 5 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

read it carefully and then spoke under obviously great emotion and indeed anger. He said that the Canadian Government had been hoping that the British and French Governments would decide that their ground forces should not go in... He spoke gravely about the effect on the Commonwealth. He feared greatly that Asian members may decide to leave. That would be disastrous.⁹⁹

When St.Laurent reiterated these concerns in his message to Eden, he could only add that given the strong reactions of the Asian members, he at least hoped events would come to show that it had been worth while.¹⁰⁰

The reactions of other Commonwealth members were predictable from the positions each had adopted in the previous months. The South African government remained uninvolved, with the minister of external affairs, Eric Louw, apparently more concerned by the lack of consultation. Australia's Menzies supported British actions, but had concerns about the Anglo-American rift.¹⁰¹ These were shared by of New Zealand's prime minister, Sidney Holland who was also disturbed about the lack of prior consultation and by the fact that in supporting Britain, New Zealand would find itself split from much of the Commonwealth and open to condemnation at the United Nations.¹⁰² The fact that even New Zealand only reluctantly supported Britain indicated the potential for division within the Commonwealth.

The real opposition to the British action within the Commonwealth came from the three Asian members. Of the three, the Indian government had consistently opposed British policy throughout the lead-up to the British

⁹⁹Inward CRO Telegram 1065 from Pritchard, 5 November, 1956. PRO DO 35/5008 Canadian Attitudes towards the Commonwealth [file CON 18/1/1].

¹⁰⁰Text of Message from St.Laurent to Eden, Inward CRO Telegram 1073 from Pritchard,, 5 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

¹⁰¹Text of Message from Menzies to Eden. Telegram 2545 from External Affairs, Canberra to Australian High Commissioner, London, 1 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

¹⁰²Prime Minister's Personal Telegram T504/56. Message dated 1 November, 1956 from Rt Hon. S.G. Holland, Prime Minister of New Zealand to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. PRO PREM 11/1096.

ultimatum. While both Pakistan's¹⁰³ and Ceylon's¹⁰⁴ prime ministers refrained from making comments on the Anglo-French ultimatum pending further study, India's government immediately issued a statement on 31 October condemning it.¹⁰⁵ The following day, Nehru severely criticized British actions, privately in a courteous message to Eden¹⁰⁶ and publicly in a more vehement speech in Hyderabad.¹⁰⁷ He did not, however, say that the Commonwealth connection was thereby endangered. Parts of the Indian press, in contrast, questioned continued Commonwealth membership.¹⁰⁸ Notwithstanding these and other public calls such as by former Indian Governor-General Shri Rajagopalachari urging withdrawal from the Commonwealth, as the crisis developed over the next few days, the real damage appeared to be to Britain's prestige and reputation rather than to the Commonwealth.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the speed and strength of the Indian government's public reactions left no doubt that there had been a serious difference of opinion between two key Commonwealth governments.

Relations between the Canadian and Indian governments remained, for the most part, firm and constructive. The Canadian and Indian delegations to the United Nations worked together to find a solution to the crisis, although

¹⁰³ Telegram 1748 from United Kingdom High Commission in Pakistan, 1 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

¹⁰⁴ Telegram 544 from NE Costar, Acting United Kingdom High Commissioner in Ceylon, 1 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

¹⁰⁵ Telegram 633 from Escott Reid, Canadian High Commissioner in India. PAC RG 25 ACC 91-2/109 box 175 file 50372-40 part 9.

¹⁰⁶ Telegram 1428 from Malcolm Macdonald, United Kingdom High Commissioner in India, 1 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

¹⁰⁷ The Hindu. 2 November, 1956. Contained in Eayrs, The Commonwealth and Suez: A Documentary Survey. pp. 249-50.

¹⁰⁸ Telegram 1429 from Macdonald, 1 November, 1956. PRO FO 371/121788; and Telegram 635 from Reid, 1 November, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 91-2/109 box 175 file 50372-40 part 9.

¹⁰⁹ Telegrams 1457 and 1461 from Macdonald to CRO, 5 November, 1956.

from different perspectives and not without problems. The contrast between Krishna Menon's moralizing on the Middle East and wavering on Hungary exasperated Pearson and destroyed Pearson's confidence in his erstwhile Indian collaborator.¹¹⁰ Their cooperation had, in the past, been a key element of the 'Indo-Canadian entente' and now there seemed little hope of resurrecting it. On the other hand, the Canadian High Commissioner to India, Escott Reid,¹¹¹ retained good access to Nehru, and Canadian officials passed on what was said and heard to the British. In the course of events, Canadian efforts were not restricted to ensuring that British actions did not entirely isolate it from India. Indian actions too, held the possibility of isolating it from Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth. The perception of a Commonwealth fissure was made all the more real by the Indian government's slowness in condemning the Soviet invasion of Hungary that was taking place at the same time. The Canadians, realizing that any comparison between the Indian reactions to Suez and Hungary was likely to exacerbate ill feeling within the Commonwealth, worked hard to convince Nehru of this. Just as important, Canadian officials in Ottawa told Pritchard about these efforts.¹¹² The Canadians did not want the gulf between Britain and India to become too great, whatever their public differences.

The reaction to British policy in Ceylon was similar to that in India. After hesitating briefly, the government condemned British actions. The opposition urged more forceful condemnation, including the closure of British bases on Ceylon, but in general, the reaction was against Britain, not the

¹¹⁰Pearson to Reid, 8 March, 1957. Quoted in Escott Reid, Envoy to Nehru. (Oxford: Oxford University, 1981) p. 182.

¹¹¹Reid has written several detailed accounts of Indo-Canadian relations during the crisis in: Envoy to Nehru; Hungary and Suez: A View from New Delhi. (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic, 1986); and Radical Mandarin: The Memoirs of Escott Reid. (Toronto: University of Toronto).

¹¹²Inward CRO Telegram 1050 from Pritchard, 1 November, 1956. FO 371/121788

Commonwealth. At a press conference on 7 November, Prime Minister SW Bandaranike said that the matter of withdrawal from the Commonwealth had never even been considered by the government.¹¹³ That the Ceylonese government evidently identified the British actions with Eden rather than with Britain weighed heavily in this reluctance to consider leaving the Commonwealth.

Pakistan reacted most strongly of the Asian members. Of the three, it had supported British diplomatic efforts the longest and was most closely tied to the Western security system but it was also an Islamic country whose population sympathized with Egypt. For its part, the government was not particularly outraged over Britain's use of force. President Iskander Mirza, confided to the Acting British High Commissioner, Maurice James, on 31 October, that he had felt all along that the only way to get Nasser to negotiate was through the use of force. The Pakistani government would have to make some form of statement critical of Britain to assuage public opinion, but he hoped that the British government would understand.¹¹⁴ Soon afterwards, the President left for Iran, leaving Prime Minister HS Suhrawardy to deal with the situation. Suhrawardy was less sympathetic to Britain than the president. In a meeting with James the next day, he conceded that he could accept some of what the British government said.¹¹⁵ The public, however, especially the Muslim League would not, and he nevertheless saw the ultimatum as fundamentally aggressive. The government, therefore, planned to issue a statement condemning it.¹¹⁶ From this point, the situation in Pakistan rapidly deteriorated in the face of anti-British public unrest which

¹¹³Telegram 572 from Costar, 7 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

¹¹⁴Telegram 1747 from Maurice James, Acting United Kingdom High Commissioner in Pakistan, 31 October, 1956. PRO FO 371/121788.

¹¹⁵Telegram 1760 from James, 1 November, 1956. PRO FO 371/121788.

¹¹⁶Telegram 1761 from James, 1 November, 1956. PRO FO 371/121788.

included calls for Pakistan to leave the Commonwealth. In the early hours of 3 November (1:30 am), the Pakistani foreign minister passed James a letter from Suhrawardy containing the precursor of a threat to leave the Commonwealth: "Our position too within the Commonwealth is becoming increasingly difficult as well as our association in the Baghdad Pact."¹¹⁷ This reflected growing domestic pressure which the government felt would force its hands within 2 days if the situation did not change.¹¹⁸

Domestic pressure in Pakistan did mount. The next day, Sunday 4 November, the chief minister of East Pakistan, addressing a crowd of students in Dacca, proclaimed that his government would recommend to the central government that Pakistan should leave the Commonwealth because of the British actions. The possibility that Pakistan's government might be forced to leave the Commonwealth was growing. Recognizing the bridging role that the Canadians had tried to play in the previous days as the crisis exploded, the CRO's permanent under-Secretary, Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, had already suggested to James that if delaying arguments with Suhrawardy about the Commonwealth failed, he should suggest that the Pakistani prime minister consult Canada before taking any final decision.¹¹⁹ James reported back that this point "as regards consultation with Canada before anything irretrievable were said or done clearly sank in."¹²⁰ He informed the acting Canadian high Commissioner of his talk with Suhrawardy.¹²¹ However, later that day, Suhrawardy and his foreign minister flew to Teheran for a hastily

¹¹⁷ Telegram 1770 from James, 3 November, 1956. PRO FO 371/121788.

¹¹⁸ Telegram 1769 from James, 3 November, 1956. PRO FO 371/121788.

¹¹⁹ Outward CRO Telegram 2075 to James, 4 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

¹²⁰ Inward CRO Telegram 1786 from James, 4 November, 1956. PRO PREM 11/1096.

¹²¹ Telegram 337 from James, 5 November, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 91-2/109 box 175 file 50372-40 part 9.

called meeting of the Muslim members of the Baghdad Pact so when the next day, 5 November, Pritchard in Ottawa inquired of Leger as to whether the Pakistanis had said anything to the Canadians, he had nothing to report.¹²²

On that same day, 5 November, the Commonwealth's Suez Crisis approached its climax with the landing of British and French troops. Speaking in the Canadian House of Commons afterwards, Pearson described the Commonwealth at that point as "on the verge of dissolution."¹²³ Certainly, though neither the Indian nor Ceylonese governments had indicated that they were considering withdrawal, the situation in Pakistan had the associated danger that should the government be compelled to leave the Commonwealth, the governments of India and Ceylon might then face mounting pressure to follow. By this point, however, Suhrawardy was more insulated both from the effects of the unrest in Pakistan and from efforts to stave off Pakistan's withdrawal. But regardless of the efforts to dissuade Pakistan from leaving the Commonwealth, the key factor in preventing this from happening was the British government's acceptance of the United Nations ceasefire. Pearson played an important part in brokering the arrangement at the General Assembly, for which he was to win the Nobel Peace Prize. In so doing his and Canada's lack of support for British policy was much more valuable to Britain and the Commonwealth than Australia's public support.

If Pearson's work at the UN had helped Britain and the Commonwealth through the crisis, the Commonwealth returned the favour by facilitating his efforts. Indo-Canadian cooperation fostered by the Commonwealth was critical to the successful outcome of Pearson's manoeuvering. It was true, nevertheless, that the Commonwealth alone could not have provided a solution

¹²²Inward CRO Telegram From Pritchard, 5 November, 1956. PRO DO 35/5008.

¹²³Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (4th (Special) Session, 22nd Parliament, vol 1, 27 November, 1956) p. 55.

to the crisis within its ranks. Although Robertson had suggested to Pearson on 1 November that a CPMM be called to salvage the situation,¹²⁴ the Commonwealth was not the appropriate body even to provide a face-saving mechanism for Britain. Within the Commonwealth, divisive issues, as this assuredly was, had to be skirted, for as the intractable Kashmir dispute and South Africa's racial policies demonstrated, it was not capable of conflict resolution. The Commonwealth, especially for the newer members, rested on calculations of interest derived from its cooperative activities. Having a limited base, both in terms of resources available and interests served, the bonds holding the it together were a fragile mix of history, trade, and common purposes. The United Nations, in contrast, was more explicitly political, and thus while no one ever spoke of 'UN bonds', was more robust in terms of its capacity to absorb conflict among members, which, after all, was its purpose.

What the Commonwealth could do, however, was to lay the groundwork for more diplomatic cooperation elsewhere, especially at the UN. Notwithstanding the fact that voting patterns in the General Assembly showed the 'Commonwealth bloc' there to be very loose indeed¹²⁵, the Canadian government hoped for a good working relationship with Asian Commonwealth members, if not on the substance or direction of policy, then in the tenor in which it was expressed. On issues, such as anti-colonialism, which might create a split between the West and the Afro-Asian countries, this might mean urging Asian Commonwealth members to exert a 'moderating influence' on other developing countries to make the language of resolutions less likely to cause umbrage

¹²⁴ Robertson to Pearson, 1 November, 1956. PAC MG 26 N1 vol 39.

¹²⁵ Such an analysis is contained in: Thomas Hovat, Bloc Politics in the United Nations. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1960) pp. 69-73.

umbrage among the colonial powers.¹²⁶ The Commonwealth and the UN remained, as the Canadian government had always wanted, two very different, if compatible and even complementary institutions. Suez had shaken much, but it did not shake the Canadian government's faith in this pattern. If anything, it had reaffirmed the importance of having an informal political institution distinct from the more formal diplomatic one dealing directly with matters of 'high politics'.¹²⁷

The Aftermath of Suez

The immediate end to the crisis did not signal the end to suspicion and ill-feeling between Commonwealth governments. The Commonwealth had not split apart, but members had to be brought back into a cooperative partnership. For the Canadian government, the task was twofold. Anglo-Canadian relations had been strained, at least temporarily, and so needed attention. More generally, however, relations within the Commonwealth, especially between Britain and the Asian members, required smoothing over. Canada being directly involved, the first was more easily accomplished, but both were essential to the functioning of the Commonwealth.

Unlike Anglo-Asian relations, there had never been any question of a break between Canada and Britain. Despite their differences, both governments had done their utmost to avoid an actual breach. The British government's behaviour had angered St.Laurent, but not so badly as to

¹²⁶ Memorandum for the Minister: The Anti-Colonialism Issue, 7 June, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 205 file 50085-F-40. Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting 1956.

¹²⁷ In the aftermath of the Crisis, John Holmes of the Canadian UN delegation reportedly told Britain's UN ambassador: "on the afternoon of the Anglo-French landings people in Ottawa suddenly realised how much they would loose by a break-up of the Commonwealth..." [Lord Lothian, United Kingdom Ambassador to the United Nations, to Home, 23 November, 1956. PRO DO 35/5422 Commonwealth Consultation: Suez Crisis (1956-7) [file CON 344/7]]

preclude the Canadian government devoting its energy to extricating Britain from the situation in which it had placed itself. The British government recognized the effort which St.Laurent, Pearson and the Canadian government had taken to downplay the split between Canada and Britain. As the crisis was beginning to subside, Pritchard's assessment of the Canadian government's response to the crisis, notwithstanding its basic opposition to British policy, was that:

So far as action was concerned, however, the Canadian government moved immediately to exercise a calming and steady influence in Canada... They were genuinely anxious to keep open criticism to a minimum and confined themselves in public to a very few carefully chosen words of regret. They also moved quickly to take up a constructive position in the United Nations and in the Commonwealth.¹²⁸

Nevertheless, even if at the height of the crisis Eden himself had expressed his appreciation to Robertson for Canada's "steady influence,"¹²⁹ in the immediate aftermath, the general feeling towards Canada and Robertson personally was such that he considered his usefulness as Canadian high commissioner ended and requested an early transfer.¹³⁰ Declaratory appreciation and Canadian desires to carry on relations as usual, not least for domestic political reasons,¹³¹ could not obscure the personal coolness confronting Robertson and other Canadian officials. This required time and

¹²⁸ Inward CRO Telegram from Pritchard, 9 November, 1956. PRO DO 35/5008.

¹²⁹ Telegram 1531 from Robertson, 6 November, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 91-2/109 box 175 file 50372-40 part 9.

¹³⁰ Granatstein, A Man of Influence. p. 299.

¹³¹ These combined, for example, to ensure that the Canadian government did not refuse a British request for the waiving of interest on the post-war loan because of the sterling crisis precipitated by Suez. [PAC RG 2 vol 5775. Cabinet Conclusions, 4 December, 1956.]

working together for shared purposes as much as anything else to overcome.¹³²

One of the areas of shared purpose between Canadian and British officials was the need to re-affirm the Commonwealth relationship, especially among the Asian members. Both governments were eager for this to happen, but, British officials such as Lord Lothian, the British ambassador to the UN, felt "there were many things in relations with the three "new" Commonwealth countries which the Canadians could handle far more easily."¹³³ Fortuitously, a trip to the Asian and Pacific Commonwealth in late November, 1956, by a senior Canadian cabinet minister, Paul Martin, the minister of health, had been planned prior to the crisis. He did not have a mandate to do any more than observe conditions, but the trip offered a chance for a Commonwealth exchange that a Canadian could more appropriately provide at that stage. In the same period, Cabinet departed from standard procedures and approved a Canadian cash grant in conjunction with similar grants by Australia and New Zealand for a project in Singapore under the Colombo Plan precisely because of the need to show Commonwealth unity.¹³⁴ As well, a visit to Ottawa by Nehru in December provided a high profile visible reminder of the Commonwealth's importance as a link to Asia and how well it had been preserved. The need to underscore the Commonwealth's continuation as dynamic association was a key consideration in the Cabinet's discussion of the appropriate Canadian representative at the upcoming independence ceremonies for Ghana in mid-January, 1957. St.Laurent had been invited to attend, but with the pressure of other duties and the distance, had absolutely no intention of going. Cabinet nevertheless felt that it was important,

¹³²Despite the personal coolness Robertson following Suez, subsequent CRO biographical notes prepared for CPMMs spoke of him in glowing terms and as someone whom the British could place complete faith.

¹³³Lothian to Home, 23 November, 1956. PRO DO 35/5422

¹³⁴PAC RG 2 vol 5775. Cabinet Conclusions 28 November, 1956.

"particulary at this time",¹³⁵ for Canada to suitably recognize the new addition to the Commonwealth. The decision was no different from what it would have been at any other time, but the rationale behind it had more substance than expediency.

There was little hope that the combination of American criticism of Britain and France over Suez and the brutal Soviet invasion of Hungary might reduce the susceptibility of developing countries to communist cultivation. As Canadian officials saw it, the United States had shown "more energy than subtlety"¹³⁶ in its efforts to counter communist activity. This still left the Commonwealth, in the Canadian government's view, as the best instrument to overcome extreme nationalism in new states and preserve Western interests.¹³⁷ Suez made it more important than ever for older members besides Britain to intensify their relations with new members. Prior to Suez, the Canadian government had resisted British government suggestions that it open a mission in the Gold Coast in recognition of its impending admission to the Commonwealth. The Canadian government was considering opening new missions in Africa, but was giving higher priority to French North Africa, where, in addition to being more important to NATO in the Canadian view, French colonists had expressed interest in emigrating to Canada.¹³⁸ But in the wake of Suez, Canadian officials became more concerned that too much hesitation might jeopardize Ghana's pro-Western

¹³⁵ PAC RG 2 series A5a vol 1892. Cabinet Conclusions, 17 January, 1957.

¹³⁶ The Present and Future Character of the Commonwealth, 4 June, 1957. PAC RG 25 vol 3445 file 1-1957/3A Brief for Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, London, 26 June-5 July, 1957.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Neil Pritchard, Deputy United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canada to RLD Jasper, Assistant Secretary, CRO, 7 September, 1956. PRO DO 35/7134 Canada - External Policy 1954-6 [file WES 177/1/4].

orientation.¹³⁹ It therefore behooved Canada, a senior member of the Commonwealth, to open a mission and provide development assistance.

The Canadian government had contributed much towards preventing a complete isolation of the old members from the new during the Suez Crisis, but there was only so much that it could do to actually bring Britain and the Asian members together afterwards in a constructive relationship. It was not simply that bilateral relationships must ultimately be settled between the parties concerned. There was also the enduring paradox that despite the independence and diversity of its members, and the fact that in this instance the breach in Commonwealth relations had been sparked by British actions, the Commonwealth still relied on British leadership.

The British government was eager to re-affirm the Commonwealth relationship and its leadership of the association. It was anxious to shake off the effects of Suez and salvage Britain's key international relationships. Almost three months after the events of early November the domestic political pressure to demonstrate continued leadership in the Commonwealth was such that, less than three weeks into his premiership as Eden's successor, Harold Macmillan was contemplating a CPMM with "something a little unusual" to silence his critics and assert British leadership.¹⁴⁰ The desire for the unusual reflected both the domestic need to demonstrate the government's critics wrong and the Commonwealth need to ensure that leaders would come. The urgency of the timing, however, was mostly a reflection of the domestic pressure. Home was more cautious; he supported

¹³⁹ Memorandum: Ghana: Notes on Political and Economic Problems - Suggestions for Canadian Policy, 27 March, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 file 12304-40 part 2 Canada-Ghana Relations (1957-8).

¹⁴⁰ Prime Minister's Personal Minute M14/57 to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 28 January, 1957. PRO DO 35/5173 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, London June-July 1957: Organisation, Administration and Press Communiqué [file CON 93/11(1)].

the idea of a CPMM to consider economic and aid issues but felt "Suez undoubtedly gave the Commonwealth a shake up and some might think the dust should be given longer to settle."¹⁴¹

The British government faced a threefold task. It had to justify holding a meeting, induce Commonwealth leaders to come and satisfy domestic critics in Parliament. Devising a rationale for the meeting which would ensure Asian participation, especially by India, was the key. Nothing would ruin the domestic impact of a CPMM more than the refusal of Nehru to attend or send a representative.¹⁴² In the absence of an economic crisis warranting a meeting on this basis so soon after the 1956 CPMM, the best inducement was thought to be an initiative in the area of development assistance. The anticipated cost ruled out Britain launching a large initiative on its own. Instead, it would seek agreement on a common effort "which might not be very costly but would be a demonstration of political solidarity."¹⁴³

The British government's preference for a low-cost option was clear. Political pressure required that it actively consider a grandiose scheme for Commonwealth development assistance - for a Commonwealth development bank - even as the bureaucracy struggled to come up with something more practical. This idea for a Commonwealth development bank was not new. The Commonwealth finance ministers' meetings in January and December, 1952, had considered the idea without making a decision. In December, 1956, however, a detailed proposal had been made for such an institution during a British parliamentary

¹⁴¹ Serial No. 4/57. Minute from Home to Macmillan, 31 January, 1957. PRO DO 35/5173.

¹⁴² Memorandum: Should We Try to Hold a Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in Mid-1957, by AW Snelling, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, CRO, 18 February, 1957. PRO DO 35/5173.

¹⁴³ Minute from Sir Henry Lintott, Deputy Under-Secretary of State, CRO, to Home, 8 February, 1957. PRO DO 35/5173.

debate on Commonwealth development.¹⁴⁴ When the British government polled other Commonwealth governments on their attitudes towards the establishment of a Commonwealth development agency or bank, it could not even bring itself to identify itself with the proposal. Instead the British memorandum merely stated that there was considerable interest in Britain for mobilizing more resources for Commonwealth development and that one of the proposals before ministers was for a Commonwealth development agency or bank.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, while sympathizing with the motives, it even recommended against it because it would not generate any new funds for development purposes.

Not surprisingly, every Commonwealth government rejected the idea for a development agency and bank.¹⁴⁶ All agreed that it would not produce new capital. Furthermore, a development agency like the one proposed would set development priorities as well as survey development needs and potential.¹⁴⁷ Centralized policy-making had always been unacceptable to countries like Canada and the prospect of having development policy set by an outside body now proved no more popular with the newer members. Commonwealth economic cooperation was, and would remain, primarily a question ensuring that economic policies took due account of other members' interests. Thus, any new initiatives on the British government's part would have to be confined to consultation and perhaps advice.¹⁴⁸ This immediately suggested the CEC, a

¹⁴⁴C. (57)129 Commonwealth Economic Development. Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet, 29 May, 1957. PRO CAB 129/87.

¹⁴⁵United Kingdom Aide Memoire: Commonwealth Development, 5 February, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 485 file 12546-40 part 1. Commonwealth Development Agency and Bank.

¹⁴⁶Serial 39/57 Minute from Home to Macmillan, 30 April, 1957. PRO 35/8361 Development of Activities of the Commonwealth Economic Committee 1957-8 [file EC 131/6 part A].

¹⁴⁷United Kingdom Aide Memoire: Commonwealth Development, 5 February, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 485 file 12546-40 part 1.

¹⁴⁸Serial 39/57 Minute from Home to Macmillan, 30 April, 1957. PRO DO 35/8361.

consultative body which the British memorandum suggested could undertake some of the information functions of a development agency. Therein lay the kernel of an idea which was to produce results.

Circulating the idea of the development agency and bank had served the domestic purpose of proving it would not work, but the government still required a practical proposal that would produce visible results. The search for an appropriate idea to present at the CPMM soon merged with the activities of the Cabinet Committee on Commonwealth Economic Development that had been established before Suez to consider ways to provide adequate assistance for African colonies after independence. At the same time that Home had promised Macmillan that he would look into the possibilities of expanding the CEC's activities to better coordinate Commonwealth development assistance, this committee was also considering expanding the CEC. Its report¹⁴⁹ to Cabinet at the end of May, less than two months before the CPMM, recommended expanding the CEC and gave Macmillan the proposal he needed without spending money that the British government did not have.¹⁵⁰

Preserving the Commonwealth as a link to the developing world was important in the evaluation of the numerous options for development assistance in the Commonwealth. The British development proposals for the CPMM arrived in Ottawa while the government was still considering its BWI aid package. There was agreement throughout the Canadian bureaucracy that the idea of the development bank was impractical and that British reservations were justified. Canada would not, therefore, encourage further exploration

¹⁴⁹C. (57)129 Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet, 29 May, 1957. Annex: Committee on Commonwealth Development: Report on Technical Assistance. PRO CAB 129/87.

¹⁵⁰C. (57)131 Sterling and Commonwealth Economic Development. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 30 May, 1957. PRO CAB 129/87.

of the issue.¹⁵¹ Neither was there any inclination to accede to British preferences for a Colombo-style plan for the Caribbean as an alternative expression of Commonwealth solidarity. Nevertheless, officials recognized that Canada would have to go beyond "pious expressions of interest."¹⁵² The Canadian government could not forever talk about being a senior Commonwealth member if it were not prepared to take a more active role in helping newly independent Commonwealth members. This same thinking underlay the emerging plan for the BWI and Pearson's support for it.¹⁵³ Developing a plan for economic assistance, however, was considerably more complex than arriving at a position on the development bank idea. The former took an entire year, the latter less than three weeks. Nevertheless, even though St. Laurent was prepared to give the broad outlines of the Canadian response to the development bank idea to Macmillan at their meeting on Bermuda in March¹⁵⁴, the formal responses to British enquiries on both this and BWI development assistance were delivered within one day of each other at the beginning of May.¹⁵⁵ Neither accepted new Commonwealth institutions, but the latter marked a Canadian Commonwealth initiative. The post-Suez environment was not one in which negative responses were best sent alone.

¹⁵¹ AWF Plumptre, Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance, to Louis Couillard, USSEA, 19 February, 1957; Louis Rasminsky, Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada to Couillard, 22 February, 1957; and Frederick Bull, Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce to Couillard, 22 February, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 12546-40 part 1.

¹⁵² Memorandum on Commonwealth Development, 28 February, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 485 file 12546-40 part 1.

¹⁵³ See pages 18-19.

¹⁵⁴ Brief 31: Proposed Commonwealth Development Agency and Bank, 18 March, 1957. PAC RG 25 vol 3524 file 19-1-AB-BER-1957/1. Meeting Between Mr. St. Laurent and Mr. Macmillan in Bermuda on March 25 and 26, 1957.

¹⁵⁵ Aide Memoire to the United Kingdom Government: Commonwealth Development, 1 May, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC86-7/414 vol 485 file 12546-40 part 1. and Aide Memoire to the United Kingdom Government: Economic Assistance for the West Indies Federation, 2 May, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 box 229 file 14020-W1-40 part 2.

It was not only for the sake of maintaining the interest of new and potential members in the Commonwealth that the Canadian government sought to demonstrate its receptiveness to new Commonwealth developments. The Canadian government also wanted to secure the other side of Commonwealth relations, Britain. Suez had underscored Britain's special role in the Commonwealth, but following so closely on the announcement of Plan G, the evident British preference to align with France rather than with Commonwealth members, suggested that despite the continuing focus of Commonwealth relations on Britain, the British government might be beginning to put less emphasis on the Commonwealth than it had in the past. There was no obligation on the British government to consult over non-Commonwealth matters such as Suez, but Canadian officials felt that the decision at key points not to, suggested a new British attitude.¹⁵⁶

Even more significant was what to the Canadian government seemed a turn to Europe by Britain. The Canadian government anticipated that the result of Macmillan's stated intention to review British foreign policy in the light of the available political, economic and military resources would be at least a partial withdrawal from Britain's global position, with a possible consequence being a lower priority for the Commonwealth. Thus, at a time when the Commonwealth was headed towards further decolonization and greater diversity, but still dependent on links to Britain, Britain seemed less willing to play the central role. The result was consideration that Canadian interests might best be served by an effort "to revive the attachment of the United Kingdom to what were once its colonies and dependencies."¹⁵⁷ This did not mean abandoning the idea of the Commonwealth as a series of bilateral

¹⁵⁶The Present and Future Character of the Commonwealth, 4 June, 1957.
PAC RG 25 vol 3445 file 1-1957/3A.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

relationships within a multilateral framework, only re-emphasizing the importance of working closely with Britain.

The Commonwealth's importance to Canadian foreign policy remained preserving constructive relations between the West and the developing world. Working more closely with Britain would not change this. Too great a dissolution of links between members had to be avoided for the Commonwealth to continue functioning. Canada and Britain, NATO allies as well as Commonwealth partners, had a shared interest in this. The events of Suez meant that the forces operating within the Commonwealth had to be seriously examined. External Affairs even went so far as to take the unusual step, for the Canadians anyway, of producing a briefing paper on the Commonwealth's future character in preparation for the 1957 CPMM.¹⁵⁸ It foresaw no significant development of Commonwealth institutions, merely intensification of existing practices to provide further cement to the bridge. On 10 June, 1957, only days before the meeting, however, the Canadian federal election, produced an unanticipated result. John Diefenbaker's Progressive Conservatives narrowly defeated St. Laurent's Liberals. Canada's representative at the 1957 CPMM would bring a vastly different conception of the Commonwealth than that of his predecessor.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4: THE DIEFENBAKER REVOLUTION COMES TO THE COMMONWEALTH

John Diefenbaker's supporters labelled his march to power 'the Diefenbaker revolution'. This 'revolution' revitalized a Progressive Conservative party mired in opposition and set it on the road to power for the first time since 1935.¹ He may have swept aside an established 'old guard' within the party, but one aspect of traditional Canadian Toryism he did not seek to change was the party's devotion to Britain and the Crown. Diefenbaker had always had "a deep and abiding emotional attachment to the Commonwealth".² As prime minister he was determined to redress what he saw as the lack of attention paid to the Commonwealth by the Liberal governments that had, excepting a interlude between 1930-5, ruled Canada since 1921.³ The election, then, foreshadowed a period of intensive Canadian engagement in Commonwealth affairs with a strong commitment to Commonwealth cooperation.

The Suez Crisis had been only the latest of a number of occasions over the years where the Tories accused the Liberals of seeking to erode ties with Britain and the Crown. The Progressive Conservative victory meant that Members of Parliament, such as Gordon Churchill, Donald Fleming, Howard Green, and Diefenbaker himself, who figured prominently in these attacks on the Liberals, became the government.⁴ It was "a Commonwealth-minded

¹See: John Meisel, The Canadian General Election of 1957. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1962) pp. 18-33.

²John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker. The Years of Achievement: 1957-1962. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976) p. 187.

³Ibid. p. 197.

⁴Their cabinet portfolios were respectively: trade and commerce, finance, public works and subsequently external affairs, and, of course, prime minister.

government [that] saw the Commonwealth as a balance wheel politically and economically in world affairs.⁵ How far the new government could actually pursue its Commonwealth commitment remained to be seen.

Diefenbaker's perceptions of the Commonwealth, like those of his cabinet colleagues, had not been shaped with direct experience of the workings of the modern Commonwealth. Over the years they had all preached the importance of ties with Britain and the Commonwealth, now they had to translate these beliefs into policy. One clue as to what the new government might do was the fact that since 1955, Diefenbaker had led a personal crusade urging Canada to take the lead in calling a Commonwealth economic conference. In this way, he hoped that the Commonwealth could act as a counter-weight to Canada's economic ties with the United States. This was a well trodden path for Canada's Conservatives. The previous Conservative government under the prime ministership of RB Bennett had been a moving force behind the 1932 Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference which spawned Commonwealth preferences.

How the new government would deal with the new Commonwealth was a different matter. One aspect of Diefenbaker's background suggested that he might deal very effectively with it. In his career as a defence lawyer in his home province of Saskatchewan, he had built an impressive reputation as a defender of minorities and as a civil rights advocate. He might, then, prove just as sensitive to the needs of new Commonwealth members. At times, however, he could sound like the Expanding Commonwealth group of parliamentarians that existed on the fringe of Britain's Conservative party.

⁵Record of Canadian Finance Minister Donald Fleming's Address. F.M. (C)57 Third Meeting. Meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers. Minutes of a Meeting Held on 30 September, 1957. PRO DO 35/5642 Proceedings of Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting, Mont Tremblant, Quebec, 1957. [file EC 537/88/16]

In a speech to the Empire Club of Canada in Toronto in February, 1957, for example, he predicted that one day other like-minded middle powers such as Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greece, West Germany and France might become members of the Commonwealth.⁶ Earnscliff and the CRO took note of this but like everyone else could only wait and see.

Diefenbaker's views on foreign policy and the Commonwealth were to be particularly important because it was an area over which he was to keep a tight reign. Prior to becoming prime minister, Diefenbaker had few opportunities to amass the wealth of experience of his predecessors at the helm of Canadian foreign policy. International affairs had, however, long been an area of interest to him. Before becoming leader of the opposition, he was the Conservative foreign affairs critic in which capacity he demonstrated strong opinions on most issues.⁷ The Commonwealth was central to his world view. So too was a commitment to 'freedom' and distrust of the Soviet Union. His view of the United States, Canada's most important partner, was mixed. He had great personal respect for President Eisenhower, but he feared that American domination of the Canadian economy would eventually lead to American political domination of Canada. One other factor that would colour his foreign policy activity was his relationship with the DEA and its 'Personalities'.

⁶ Reuter teletype, Toronto, 9 February, 1956. PRO DO 35/5012 "The Nature of the Commonwealth": Discussions on Commonwealth Expansion (1955-7) [file CON 18/4 part A].

⁷ A good and brief summary of Diefenbaker's views and perspective on foreign policy issues as he assumed office is contained in an account of Diefenbaker's foreign policy written by Basil Robinson, his External Affairs liaison officer - See: Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. pp. 3-9.

Mr. Diefenbaker Goes to London: The 1957 CPMM

The new prime minister had the opportunity to demonstrate his strong commitment to the Commonwealth immediately. Days after assuming the premiership on 21 June, he was on his way to London to attend the CPMM that Macmillan had planned to affirm the Commonwealth's soundness following Suez. In Diefenbaker, Macmillan had an enthusiastic partner, perhaps even more enthusiastic than he wanted. At the new Cabinet's first meeting, Diefenbaker set out his objectives for the London meetings. His first objective was to improve Commonwealth relations in general; his second, to increase trade between Commonwealth members.⁸ To accomplish these, he wanted the other Commonwealth leaders to agree to a Commonwealth conference on trade and economic issues. While Diefenbaker was in London, Fleming and Churchill, his key economic ministers, met with their officials and those from DEA to find ways to achieve this. Officials foresaw many obstacles, but eventually developed a strategy to gain acceptance for the idea. The government would first invite Commonwealth finance ministers to Canada for their annual autumn meeting in conjunction with the meetings of the World Bank and IMF.⁹ The idea of a larger conference could be discussed then. When the secretary to the cabinet, Robert Bryce, communicated this idea to Diefenbaker, he readily agreed.

Diefenbaker raised this idea with Macmillan on 25 June, the day before the CPMM formally convened. Macmillan did not raise any objections to the principle of holding the regular meeting of finance ministers in Canada. However, privately, he was unenthusiastic about Diefenbaker's zeal for

⁸PAC RG 2 series A5a, vol 1892, Cabinet Conclusions, 21 June, 1957.

⁹PAC RG 2 series A5a vol 1892, Cabinet Conclusions, 25 June, 1957.

Commonwealth meetings and conferences. In his minute to Home describing his meeting with Diefenbaker, Macmillan commented that the idea of holding the finance ministers' meeting in Canada would "at any rate be less disturbing than a Commonwealth Trade Conference of Prime Ministers."¹⁰ A larger meeting posed several problems, the main ones being that the preparations would take a lot of work and there was little prospect that it could meet expectations for success. A failed conference would be worse for both Diefenbaker and Macmillan than not having tried at all. For Diefenbaker and his minority government, it would mean the collapse of a major part of his economic and foreign policy. For Macmillan, Britain's bargaining position in European trade talks would be weakened if something that could be perceived as an alternative revealed itself not to be one and domestic critics of both his Commonwealth commitment and European policy would eagerly latch on to it.

When the Commonwealth prime ministers discussed Commonwealth economic relations, Diefenbaker's idea of a trade conference was not their primary concern. Instead, it was Britain's trade relations with Western Europe and the effect of any changes in these on its Commonwealth trading partners. The other Commonwealth leaders wanted access to British markets for their countries' exports ensured. Macmillan wanted to reassure them on this point and avoid public criticism of his European policy because such criticism could undermine his government's efforts at demonstrating its commitment to the Commonwealth. Many of the prime ministers were wary, but Diefenbaker came away convinced that Britain needed to secure closer economic ties with

¹⁰ Extract from Minute No. M297/57 from the Prime Minister to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 25 June, 1957. PRO DO 35/5638 General Correspondence Covering IBRD/IMF Meetings in Washington and Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting in Canada, 1957 [file EC 537/88/11].

Europe and assured that Canadian interests would be safeguarded. In his report to Cabinet he observed that:

It was clear that the United Kingdom had to become a member of the proposed European Free Trade Area, as otherwise Germany might eventually dominate Europe from the economic point of view and displace Britain in many of her foreign markets.¹¹

He was more concerned that his Commonwealth colleagues' preoccupation with Europe placed added obstacles in the way of convening an economic conference than that the British plan would harm either Canada or the Commonwealth.

In the absence of any effort by Macmillan at their meeting before the CPMM to actually dissuade him from bringing up the idea of a Commonwealth economic conference, Diefenbaker had gone right ahead. He raised the subject at a session attended only by the prime ministers or their deputies with no secretary or minutes.¹² He found little support for the idea.¹³ Menzies offered support initially, but withdrew it fearing a repetition of the 1932 Ottawa Conference which he felt in the long run had restricted Australia. He also felt that the best way to increase living standards in the Pacific region was to increase trade with Japan. Macmillan was the only leader to offer any support, but only for the 'less bothersome' idea of holding the finance ministers' meeting in Canada.¹⁴ That, at least, offered Diefenbaker some hope. He came away disappointed but not discouraged. He and his

¹¹PAC RG 2 series A5a vol 1892, Cabinet Conclusions, 6 July, 1957.

¹²Rumbold to James Thomson, Deputy United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canada, 12 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/5638.

¹³PAC RG 2 series A5a vol 1892, Cabinet Conclusions, 6 July, 1957.

¹⁴Rumbold to Thomson, 12 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/5638.

government would make every effort to ensure that at the September meeting discussions about a larger trade meeting would figure prominently.

There was more than one obstacle to Diefenbaker's cherished Commonwealth economic and trade conference. The other leaders' focus on other issues reflected the largest: Diefenbaker was out of step with the rest of the Commonwealth. Some members, Australia, for example, still supported centralized Commonwealth machinery to promote Commonwealth political cohesion,¹⁵ but not the idea of a trade conference. Clearly there were some areas where Commonwealth cooperation was more feasible than others.

Diefenbaker and his ministers had much catching up to do about the nature and workings of the modern Commonwealth. His basic perspective on Commonwealth relations and their importance to him was epitomized by the fact that he led off his report to Cabinet with a description of his audience with the Queen.¹⁶ He was impressed by the fact that representatives from different races could work together, but parts of his report suggested that he had some distance to go in coming to grips with the new Commonwealth. He described past reluctance to admit non-white members, for example, as "natural enough if one considered that a trend of this kind might eventually result in these nations having a majority".¹⁷ The new Commonwealth would take some getting used to, but he and his colleagues remained committed to it.

The Commonwealth leaders had discussed strengthening Commonwealth economic links and institutions, but not as Diefenbaker might have wished.

¹⁵ Inward CRO Telegram 564 from Lord Carrington, United Kingdom High Commissioner in Australia, 3 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/5421 Australian Attitudes to Commonwealth Consultation and Co-operation. [file CON 344/1]

¹⁶ PAC RG 2 Series A5a vol 1892, Cabinet Conclusions, 6 July, 1957.

¹⁷ Ibid.

When the British government launched the idea of holding the 1957 meetings, it expected that British proposals on development assistance would dominate the discussions.¹⁸ Britain's limited financial resources quickly ruled this out, and in its stead the British government presented a more modest, two-part proposal to develop the CEC. The first part was outlined in a memorandum circulated to Commonwealth prime ministers at the beginning of the meetings. It was presented ostensibly as a more practical alternative for furthering common objectives in economic development than the previously circulated idea of a Commonwealth development bank.¹⁹ The memorandum suggested expanding some of the CEC's existing activities but the principal elements of this aspect of the British proposal were to expand the scope of the CEC's information gathering and disseminating activities "so as to better throw light upon and spread knowledge of economic problems of common interest to Commonwealth countries."²⁰

The second element of the British CEC proposal addressed its institutional structure rather than the substance of its activities. The British government suggested having a permanent, full-time, paid, chairman for the committee, preferably from another Commonwealth country. This would replace the existing practice of rotating the position annually among the

¹⁸Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting. Minutes of a Meeting Held on 20 June, 1957. PRO CAB 130/129 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting (June 1957).

¹⁹Memorandum: The Commonwealth Economic Committee, June 1957. PRO DO 35/8361 Development of Activities of the Commonwealth Economic Committee 1957-1958 (file EC 131/6 part A).

²⁰Memorandum from Home to Diefenbaker, 28 June, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/160 vol 99 file 8490-40 part 3. Commonwealth Economic Committee: Reports and Activities (1953-7).

Commonwealth high commissioners who comprised the committee.²¹ Having a permanent chairman was supposed to make the CEC more effective in two ways. First, high commissioners had many other duties so that very often the CEC's chairman could not devote much attention to the job. This looked to be a growing impediment to the committee's effectiveness as the turn of smaller and newer members such as Ceylon, Malaya and Ghana came to take the chair. A second factor was that CRO officials hoped that having someone from outside Britain at its head would make the CEC seem more of a Commonwealth institution and thus more likely to become a focus of activity, especially by newer members, than if it were perceived as a British dominated body. This would also reduce any negative political repercussions from ending the rotation after all the white members had taken a turn chairing the Committee when only India of the non-white members had.

The first part of the proposals was mentioned in the final communiqué.²² The second part was not even in the minutes. Canadian officials examining Home's memorandum containing the first part commented: "The proposal is rather innocuous and its usefulness questionable. It is not, however, objectionable."²³ The United Nations, at Canada's instigation, was already preparing reports on what was being done by and for countries in the field of development assistance, the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee published such information in its annual report and the OEEC had done similar work in the past. The principal feature of the

²¹Serial No. 65/57, Minute from Home to Macmillan, 27 June, 1957. PRO DO 35/8561. The British representative was a senior CRO official.

²²"Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 1957. Final Communiqué", The Commonwealth at the Summit. p.56.

²³Couillard to Leger, 1 July, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/160 vol 99 file 8490-40 part 3.

initiative so far as they could see was that it was a Commonwealth exercise which the British government needed and which would make the new Canadian government happy without causing too many complications. The second aspect would be an even greater demonstration of Commonwealth institution-building, but would therefore be more controversial. Unlike the first, it remained a matter between the prime ministers themselves pending a decision on expanding the CEC. Diefenbaker kept it strictly between prime ministers and did not solicit advice from DEA on the issue. It was a relatively small matter, but it foreshadowed more serious differences between the prime minister and his foreign policy advisors.

Commonwealth Trade: Canada-Britain Trade Initiatives

Diefenbaker's planned initiative on Commonwealth trade had not had the impact he had wished, but he inadvertently rectified this with an even more dramatic unplanned initiative. At a press conference in Ottawa on 7 July, the day after returning from London, Diefenbaker announced the government's intention to divert fifteen percent of Canadian imports from the United States to Britain. The statement took officials and ministers on both sides of the Atlantic completely by surprise.²⁴ The implications were immense.

²⁴ Diefenbaker describes it in his memoirs as an effort "to help solve Canada's adverse balance of trade with the United States [and that it] served to focus the attention of the entire Commonwealth and the world at large on Commonwealth questions. It was also a direct challenge to British industry and initiative..." [Diefenbaker, One Canada. The Years of Achievement. p. 197. The general consensus, however, is that, unused to the constraints of office, he made the mistake of speaking without thinking. [Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. p. 14. and GL Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation. (The Canadian Centenary Series 19) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986) p. 44.]

It would require diverting over C\$600 million²⁵ of Canadian imports from American suppliers to British ones. Because many imports could not be supplied by British producers, imports of American goods that Britain could supply would have to be cut much more than fifteen percent.²⁶ In the process, the value of Canadian imports from Britain would more than double.²⁷

Canadian officials quickly convened emergency meetings in Ottawa and Washington, where several key officials were attending talks with the Americans, to find ways to implement Diefenbaker's offer. They faced no easy task. Using tariffs to achieve the objective invited American retaliation. Moreover, any solution had to maintain the integrity of GATT trade rules for there to be any hope of using GATT to encourage an outward looking European trade arrangement. There was also a danger to Canada's economy from blocking American imports where American suppliers were the lowest cost producers. In areas such as capital goods imports, switching away from low cost American suppliers could impair Canadian competitiveness. The Canadian government, then, needed a way to accomplish a huge trade diversion which would not encourage American protectionists; would be acceptable to Britain; and would maintain free choice for Canadian importers.

²⁵The Canadian dollar floated against the American dollar. In the mid- and late 1950's the two traded near parity with a slight premium on the Canadian dollar which fluctuated between US\$1.01 and US\$1.05.

²⁶CG Cruickshank, Senior United Kingdom Trade Commissioner in Canada, to H. Levine, Board of Trade, 10 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/8730 Canadian Proposed 15% Diversion of Trade from the United States to the United Kingdom.
[file EC 2632/11/6]

²⁷Figures derived from "Table 5: Summary of the Trade of Canada with Commonwealth and Other Countries, Fiscal Years 1886-1921 and Calendar Years 1926-1968", Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Trade of Canada. Calendar Years 1966-1968. pp. 26-7.

Canadian officials considered a number of courses of action, none of which seemed promising. These included having the prime minister and cabinet ministers take advantage of their prestige and new mandate to launch a vigorous programme, in conjunction with partners in the private sector, to encourage Canadians to buy from British exporters by reminding them of the national interest thereby served. A second possibility for reducing Canadian imports from the United States in the face of American agricultural protection and planned American increases to tariffs on lead and zinc, and possible increases on copper, was to use GATT rules and withdraw equivalent tariff concessions on capital goods. But this was contrary to the broader interests of Canada's economy and so was unappealing. Officials reviewing these option were not very happy about Diefenbaker's announcement.²⁸ Substantive measures to accomplish the diversion would produce more problems than they would solve. Officials' one hope was that once ministers understood the implications of what Diefenbaker had said, Cabinet would settle for an easy package that looked good on paper but meant little in practice.²⁹ In the meantime, Canadian officials presented a helpful face to their new boss, but made little secret of their unhappiness to their British counterparts.³⁰

In contrast to the Canadian officials' dismay, the British government eagerly examined the possibilities of Diefenbaker's offer. The potential opportunities were too great to ignore and any reappraisal of the British

²⁸ Telex 1700 from Canadian Embassy in Washington. Couillard, Claude Isbister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Trade and Commerce, and AFW Plumptre, Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance, to Leger, 8 July, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 294 file 50123-B-40 part 1. Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference (1957-8).

²⁹ Cruickshank to Levine, 12 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/8730.

³⁰ Cruickshank to Levine, 10 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/8730.

trade relations with Europe had to consider this offer.³¹ If the British government failed to act and the proposal died, the blame for its failure might fall on the British government. Not only could this damage Anglo-Canadian relations, but more importantly, it would mean entering into the European talks with British advocates of closer Commonwealth ties feeling that the government had failed to do everything possible in that area.³² Beyond this defensive aspect of the British government's response to Diefenbaker's offer, the need to respond quickly was exacerbated by the certainty that Canadian officials would be briefing Diefenbaker on the difficulties posed by his suggestion.

Like those in Canada, British officials immediately began examining how to accomplish the trade diversion. Diefenbaker's advocacy of new Commonwealth trade arrangements notwithstanding, British officials felt that a bilateral arrangement was more likely to be productive than a broader Commonwealth deal. They did not reject the notion of a Commonwealth initiative so as to have that to fall back on and to avoid alienating Diefenbaker, but they concentrated on developing proposals for increasing bilateral trade. Some of these corresponded with those which Canadian officials were considering, such as a campaign by the Canadian government to encourage private importers to 'buy British', a new government purchasing directive in favour of British sources, and the use of tariffs, especially through the re-establishment of preferential margins removed in 1947.³³

³¹C.C.(57)50(1), Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 9 July, 1957. PRO CAB 128/31 part 2, Cabinet Conclusions.

³²C.(57)164 Anglo-Canadian Trade. Note by the President of the Board of Trade, 17 July, 1957. PRO CAB 129/88 Cabinet Memoranda 1957.

³³Under the terms of the 1947 Exchange of Letters, Canada and Britain renounced their preference agreement, giving each the right to reduce or eliminate preferences without consultation. In return, each granted most

Other ideas went far beyond these to include import licensing and quantitative restrictions on American imports.³⁴ The problem with these proposals was the anticipated negative American reaction to discriminatory actions. To overcome this, the idea of a free trade agreement between Canada and Britain emerged as the cornerstone of the British response to Diefenbaker's proposal. This would "make respectable" discrimination against the United States by both Canada and Britain.³⁵ As Britain had almost no duties on Canadian imports and Canada had virtually no non-tariff restrictions on British imports, what would have to be modified were British import restrictions on Canadian goods and Canadian tariffs on British goods. The only way for Britain to remove restrictions on Canadian goods while maintaining them against other dollar imports and for Canada to avoid difficulties with the United States was a free trade area. The question was, would Diefenbaker accept the idea?

The British government proceeded cautiously. From the outset those dealing with the issue made every effort not to place the Canadian prime minister in an awkward situation by either appearing too keen or too disinterested.³⁶ They knew the difficulties that free trade would pose for

favoured nation (MFN) status to the other. In the late 1950s, about 90% of Canadian exports to Britain were primary products, and most (approximately 55%) entered free of duty from any source. Nevertheless, almost 40% continued to enjoy some form of non-contractual preference ranging from less than 1% to over 30%. As British exports to Canada were manufactured or semi-manufactured goods, and these were sectors Canadian governments wished to encourage, British goods enjoyed fewer preferences entering Canada. Where some margins remained, cost and delivery problems still put British industry at a competitive disadvantage to American producers.

³⁴ Cruickshank to Levine, 12 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/8730.

³⁵ Minute from HE Davies, Assistant Secretary, CRO, to Snelling, 17 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/8730.

³⁶ Outward Telegram 55 from the Board of Trade to United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canada, 9 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/8730.

Diefenbaker, not least because the balance of advantage would tilt heavily towards Britain. For these reasons British ministers, more so than officials, were at first reluctant to press the free trade idea as they appreciated the precariousness of a minority government and did not wish to do anything to damage Diefenbaker's pro-British government.³⁷ Eventually it became clear that nothing short of a free trade agreement would produce the target trade diversion.³⁸ British officials felt that Diefenbaker's apprehensions about the level of American investment in Canada could be used to overcome some of his expected reservations by offering the prospect of more British investment. Even so, it would be a hard sell. A crucial aspect of any proposal, however, was that it would have to be launched during ministerial discussions. The proposals, if communicated to Canadian officials first, would certainly be subject to destructive criticism.³⁹

The proposal for a free trade agreement between Canada and Britain was first raised with Canadian ministers by Heathcoate Amory, the British minister of agriculture, fisheries, and food, in Ottawa on 9 September, 1957. In a meeting with Diefenbaker and Fleming, Amory asked them to consider participating in a free trade agreement covering both agricultural and industrial products. Diefenbaker's first reaction, after he had ascertained that it would not require Canada joining the proposed European free trade area, was negative even without official advice. He could see how it would benefit British exporters, but did not see what advantage there would be for Canadian producers. Diefenbaker said that, under the

³⁷Minute from Garner to Snelling, 26 July, 1957. PRO DO 35/8730.

³⁸C.C.(57) 187 Note by Sir Roger Makins, Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, 23 August, 1957. PRO CAB 129/88 Cabinet Memoranda 1957.

³⁹C.C.(57) 62(2) Commonwealth Affairs, 27 August, 1957. PRO CAB 128/31 part 2. Cabinet Conclusions.

circumstances, he was prepared to look sympathetically at a proposal where the balance of advantage lay with Britain, perhaps to the extent of a 60:40 ratio, but he did not think that the British proposal offered anything at all to Canada. He was also beginning to back away from his fifteen percent offer even as a target and wondered how a bilateral agreement between Canada and Britain would look in terms of the broader goal of strengthening Commonwealth trade generally which he maintained was the context within which he had suggested the trade diversion.⁴⁰ Later in a meeting with Fleming and his officials, British officials tried to sweeten the deal by offering to remove British quantitative restrictions on Canadian imports even before concluding a free trade agreement.⁴¹ The realities of office proved stronger than ministers' sentimental attachments and the Canadian reaction remained negative.

The British proposal was discussed further at bilateral ministerial meetings in conjunction with the September finance ministers' meeting. The Canadian position remained unchanged, although at one point, Diefenbaker told Garner that were another election to return a Conservative majority, he could reconsider the idea.⁴² Meanwhile, the issue threatened to damage relations between Canada and Britain. Diefenbaker had little support for his original offer within Cabinet, and ministers feared that the issue might arise in the election that could come at any time. Word of the British proposal leaked to

⁴⁰Plumptre to Taylor, 9 September, 1957. PAC RG 19 vol 4192 file 8627/C212/U57. Free Trade Areas: Canada-United Kingdom (1957-1961).

⁴¹Minutes of a Meeting to Discuss Certain United Kingdom Proposals to Increase the Level of Exchanges Between Canada and the United Kingdom, held on 9 September, 1957. PAC RG 19 vol 4192 file 8627/C212/U57.

⁴²Garner to Laithwaite, CRO, 7 October, 1957. Enclosure - Discussions between United Kingdom and Canadian Ministers, 3 October, 1957. PRO DO 35/8731 United Kingdom Proposals for a Free Trade Area with Canada. [file EC 2632/11/10 part A]

the Canadian press, and Fleming, who was unhappy with Diefenbaker's offer, publicly discounted the idea. So sensitive were Canadian ministers to their embarrassing position - having to reconcile their public proclamations favouring closer Commonwealth ties and less reliance on the United States with their party's traditional support for the protection of Canadian industry - that at the end of the ministerial trade talks, the communiqué outlined the British proposal but made no mention of any Canadian response. Although mindful of the importance of not allowing the trade issue to "imperil the fundamental goodwill towards the United Kingdom"⁴³ of the new Canadian government because of the possible importance of this in other areas, this reticence began to exasperate the British, especially when Fleming and Churchill denied that there was a formal offer to consider in the Canadian House of Commons in late October and early December.⁴⁴

Faced with Canadian refusal to consider free trade, three more limited measures would have to accomplish the trade diversion. The Canadian government agreed to revise its purchasing policies to encourage more federal government purchases from British sources. It also promised to review Canadian tariff exemptions for Canadian tourists returning from Britain and both governments undertook to arrange visits by high level trade delegations.⁴⁵ The results of all this were rather meager. The most significant of these measures was the Canadian undertaking on government

⁴³ Dispatch 25 From United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canada to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 18 October, 1957. CRO Confidential Print, 8 November, 1957. PRO DO 35/7136 Canada: External Policy 1957-60. [file WES 177/1/6]

⁴⁴ Minute from Lintott to Laithwait, 31 October, 1957. PRO DO 35/8731; and Minute from Rumbold to Lintott, 13 December, 1957, PRO DO 35/8471 Commonwealth Economic Conference 1958. [file EC 763/2 part A]

⁴⁵ Memorandum: Anglo-Canadian Trade [n.d.], PRO DO 35/8730.

purchases. These were governed by a 1950 directive giving Canadian producers a ten percent preference over those from 'hard' currency countries, that is the United States, but on an equal basis with those from 'soft' currency countries such as Britain, West Europe and Japan. In August, 1958, Cabinet agreed to a new purchasing directive which replaced the 'hard' and 'soft' currency distinction with a 'Commonwealth' and 'non-Commonwealth' one. Commonwealth producers were put on an equal basis as Canadian producers, all others were put at a ten percent discount.⁴⁶ Shortly afterwards, however, this directive had to be suspended because of fears it might jeopardize the Canada-US defence production sharing arrangements then being negotiated.⁴⁷ The Canadian government did try to increase the number of Canadian tourists and students going to Britain and it dutifully dispatched a fifty-eight member trade delegation headed by the trade minister, Churchill, in late November, 1957. As the trade mission departed, Diefenbaker publicly reiterated his goal of a fifteen percent trade diversion, despite having backed away from it at the meeting with Amory. He maintained: "I would never have enunciated such a principle last July if I had not thought it possible."⁴⁸ To the relief of Canadian officials and many of Diefenbaker's cabinet colleagues, his actions never matched his rhetoric. The domestic economic and political ramifications were too great for it to be otherwise. Diefenbaker remained committed to the idea of increasing Commonwealth trade but the British government would have to make do with whatever resulted from the other element of his July trade initiative.

⁴⁶PAC RG 2 series A5a vol 1899, Cabinet Conclusions, 29 August, 1959.

⁴⁷Memorandum to Cabinet by Minister of Finance. Government Purchasing Policy. PAC RG 24 ACC 86-7/414 vol 11 file 10364-40 part 3. United Kingdom - Canada Continuing Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs.

⁴⁸Extracts from the Montreal Gazette dated 22 November, 1957.
PRO DO 35/8730.

The Road to the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference: Getting Agreement

The 1957 CPMM's final communiqué noted the Canadian government's invitation to hold that year's post-IMF/World Bank meeting of Commonwealth finance ministers in Canada. The acceptance of this invitation represented only a partial success for Diefenbaker. The Commonwealth leaders had not agreed that plans for a larger Commonwealth economic conference would be developed there, only that the concept of such a conference would be discussed. Getting agreement for the larger meeting remained a key part of the new government's trade agenda. As far as Diefenbaker and his colleagues were concerned, the purpose of the finance minister's meeting, scheduled for the end of September at Mont Tremblant, Quebec, was to gain this agreement.

The Commonwealth trade conference was an article of faith for the new Canadian government and had formed part of the Progressive Conservative party's election platform. Although Cabinet knew that it wanted a trade conference and knew what the conference was supposed to accomplish, it was unclear as to how this was to be accomplished. The discussions within the Canadian government and between the British and Canadian governments resulting from Diefenbaker's offer demonstrated that the new Canadian government was just as committed to the principles of GATT and non-discrimination in trade as was its predecessor. This limited the scope of measures that the Canadian government was prepared to contemplate to increase the level of intra-Commonwealth trade.

The negative reaction to the idea of an economic and trade conference from Diefenbaker's Commonwealth colleagues, in turn, underscored the limited prospects for increasing Commonwealth trade. For the same reasons

Commonwealth leaders had supported the idea of an outward looking European trading system, they would not support an inward looking Commonwealth trading system. Diefenbaker's apprehension about high levels of American trade and investment as a rationale for the conference was not a convincing argument for a trade conference. Most other Commonwealth governments would have been happy to have more American trade and investment. The new Canadian government, then, faced an up-hill struggle to convince its Commonwealth partners of the utility of a Commonwealth conference dedicated to economic and trade issues.

In an effort to win other Commonwealth governments' agreement for a larger trade conference, Fleming circulated a memorandum to Commonwealth finance ministers on Canadian ideas to increase intra-Commonwealth trade for discussion at Mont Tremblant. It covered a vast array of topics and included something for everyone. The memorandum stressed that the Canadian government did not want to establish a new system of Commonwealth preferences, but rather, believed "that the expansion of Commonwealth Trade is consistent in general with the maintenance and improvement of trade between Commonwealth countries and other countries",⁴⁹ and wanted to increase Commonwealth trade by other means. The two important Canadian objectives were given as removing quantitative restrictions on trade and Britain moving to full convertibility of sterling.⁵⁰ To assist in these and the general objective of increasing Commonwealth trade the memorandum suggested devising government procurement policies to encourage bids from other Commonwealth countries, cooperating on wider trade questions, and increasing Commonwealth investment. To emphasize

⁴⁹ Memorandum for Discussion by Commonwealth Finance Ministers, 9 August, 1957. PAC RG 2 vol 1891 file C-20-5 Cabinet Documents 1957.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

the Canadian government's commitment to maintaining global trade relations, but within a Commonwealth framework, other topics suggested for discussion at Mont Tremblant included cooperative approaches to managing relations with Europe and the United States, and improved consultative mechanisms to let members know what would be said in any bilateral talks with the Americans. In the area of aid, the memorandum suggested reviewing the Colombo Plan to ensure it worked effectively. Another suggestion under the rubric of development - that Canadian wheat surpluses be used as assistance under the Colombo Plan - had more to do with helping Conservative supporters among Canada's wheat farmers than meeting the needs of developing countries. The list of possible supplementary topics for discussion at Mont Tremblant included improving Commonwealth communications and transportation by modernizing cable links and reducing shipping rates between members; increasing tourism by increasing travel allowances; the need to negotiate tax treaties between members and measures to coordinate Commonwealth gold and uranium production. Rather ingenuously, it concluded by observing that many of the topics suggested were more suitable for discussion at a larger conference at a later date with the upcoming meeting setting the date for that conference rather than dealing directly with the issues.

The plethora of topics suggested in the Canadian memorandum could not disguise the fact that there was little substance to the proposal. The memorandum contained much to talk about, but few concrete measures to actually increase intra-Commonwealth trade. This was certainly the opinion of the British government. Sir Roger Makins, the joint permanent secretary to the Treasury, in a note to Cabinet on the Canadian memorandum observed that despite all the topics offered for discussion, or rather because of all them, there was not really adequate material for a successful Commonwealth

economic conference.⁵¹ The Cabinet agreed with this assessment, "experience suggested that to be successful, a full-scale Conference of the nature proposed should concentrate on a single major issue, not the miscellany suggested."⁵² Nevertheless, the British government did not want to alienate the new Canadian government during the bilateral talks following-up Diefenbaker's trade diversion offer by rejecting the conference proposal.

There were other reasons for the British government not to block the dubious Canadian proposal. A Commonwealth economic conference would provide a hedge against the possible failure of the bilateral talks and it would serve British interests in European talks by presenting another option. There were also the same domestic political pressures which had made a quick response to Diefenbaker's trade diversion offer important. Furthermore, by 1958, the European negotiations might have reached a point where a Commonwealth meeting was necessary. The British reservations about the proposals contained in the Canadian memorandum were not, therefore, communicated to the Canadian government, although Canadian officials were apprised of them informally.

Despite its reservations, at Mont Tremblant, the British government took a positive view of the Canadian proposals for an economic conference. The British delegation even had a face-saving idea ready for the Canadians if other Commonwealth members did not support the idea. This was a suggestion for a meeting of senior officials in 1958 to discuss developments in European

⁵¹C.C.(57) 187 Note by Sir Roger Makins, 23 August, 1957. PRO CAB 129/88 Cabinet Memoranda 1957.

⁵²C.C.(57) 62(2) Commonwealth Affairs, 27 August, 1957. PRO CAB 128/31 part 2. Cabinet Conclusions.

trade negotiations.⁵³ The reluctance to block the Canadian proposal, though, did not alter the fact that the British government's main objectives - to secure dollar reinforcements for Britain's foreign exchange reserves and reductions in Canadian tariffs against imports from Britain⁵⁴ - were purely bilateral. Regardless of the outcome of the conference proposal, the British government's preference for, and emphasis on, remained the bilateral trade talks.

The stated Canadian objectives for the proposed Commonwealth conference as set out in the Canadian memorandum were also essentially bilateral. One of them, the convertibility of sterling was explicitly so, and the other, the removal of quantitative restrictions, implicitly so. Trade with Britain accounted for the preponderance of Canadian trade with Commonwealth countries. Notwithstanding Canadian desires for the lifting of restrictions on specific products and commodities by other Commonwealth members and dependencies, most of the benefits for Canadian producers from lifting restrictions would come from increased access to British markets. Even with political difficulties associated with the British free trade proposals in their original form, bilateral avenues would logically have been the most appropriate means to pursue these goals. The government's Commonwealth-oriented ideology, Anglo-centric as it was, and its desire to forge tighter Commonwealth links, obscured this and so the pursuit of bilateral economic objectives was bound up with its Commonwealth euphoria.

⁵³C. (57)200 Proposed Commonwealth Economic Conference. Memorandum by the Prime Minister, 9 September, 1957. PRO CAB 129/88 Cabinet Memoranda 1957.

⁵⁴Minute from Brook to Macmillan, 26 August, 1957. PRO CAB 21/3102.

In his opening speech at Mont Tremblant, Fleming stated that the Canadian government wanted the Commonwealth to change Canada's economic relationship with the world.⁵⁵ Fundamentally, the Canadian government was dissatisfied that two thirds of Canada's external trade was with the United States and it saw the Commonwealth as the means to balance this. Although Diefenbaker's trade diversion offer, unplanned as it was, targeted the one market capable of making a significant difference to this, the government continued to think in broader terms. Similarly, despite the fact that in most economic matters, Britain was Canada's key interlocutor, Diefenbaker and Fleming both stressed the importance of increasing Commonwealth consultation. They also called for more cooperation to help the Commonwealth's developing members. Notwithstanding the fact that it was Canada that they most wanted the Commonwealth to help, the prospect of more aid together with the need to further discuss Britain's European trade negotiations, meant that the Canadian campaign for a larger conference succeeded.

The conference, like the original Canadian memorandum, would attempt to cover a great deal of ground. The meeting proposed no fewer than eight main areas of discussion for the conference. These included: the significance to Commonwealth countries of changes in the world trading system; measures to increase Commonwealth trade; progress to freer trade and payments; the state of economic growth in less developed members; how to find new sources of capital and development assistance for these members; agricultural trade; the implications to Commonwealth members of European trade negotiations; and

⁵⁵ F.M. (C)57 Third Meeting. Meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers. Minutes of a Meeting Held on 30 September, 1957. PRO DO 35/5642. Proceedings of Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting, Mont Tremblant, Quebec, 1957 [file EC 537/88/16].

arrangements for Commonwealth economic consultation.⁵⁶ Whether the conference succeeded in meeting the Canadian government's objectives would depend on which of these received the greatest emphasis. The answer to this would await the arrival of delegates to Montreal, the site selected by the Canadian government for the conference. Between September, 1957 and the 15 September, 1958, opening of the conference, both the Canadian and British governments devoted a great deal of effort to ensuring that what ever happened, the conference did not fail.

The Anglo-Canadian Effort to Make the Conference Work

The Canadian and British governments were moving on parallel and largely complementary paths. Both had launched Commonwealth initiatives in 1957 for domestic political purposes, albeit with different prompting. The British proposals at the CPMM for expanding the CEC's role were defensive, motivated by a desire to placate restless backbenchers who wanted more visibility for the Commonwealth in British policy. The Canadian government's desire for a Commonwealth economic conference was a more positive policy objective and formed part of the Progressive Conservative Party's platform. The agreement to convene the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference (CTEC) was a major, if fleeting, success for the Canadian government. Having the conference called would count for nothing if it failed. Some of the immediate political pressure was removed via the Progressive Conservative's massive election victory on 31 March, 1958, which gave them 208 of 265 seats. Pressure from the risk of immediate defeat in the House of Commons was now gone, but it was replaced by the fact that there was now nothing preventing the decisive

⁵⁶Meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers, Mont Tremblant, Quebec. Communiqué. PRO DO 35/5642.

implementation of the government's declared policies. The British government also had an important stake in a successful conference for political reasons at home and because of the possible effect failure could have on its European negotiations. Once the CTEC had been agreed to, then, it was important to both the Canadian and British governments that it be perceived as a success.

The most obvious measure of success would be substantive measures to increase intra-Commonwealth trade. Failing that, however, there were other avenues for success. The two which received the most attention from the Canadian and British governments were institution building and development assistance. Both could increase economic cooperation even if they had only an indirect impact on trade. But both were, in a sense, admissions of the impracticality of the conference's trade objectives.

The British and Canadian governments worked closely, but they did not work together. Each had its own emphasis which became apparent at the CTEC preparatory meeting of officials held in London between 11-13 February, 1958. There, officials tried to develop a more concrete conference agenda. Part of this included allocating responsibility for preparing papers for discussion at a second preparatory meeting. The Canadian delegation, notwithstanding their dearth of ideas, but reflecting their government's desire for some form of trade initiative to come from the Montreal conference sought responsibility for the paper on Commonwealth trade. British officials wanted to do the paper on Commonwealth consultation.⁵⁷ The British government was, for the most part, satisfied with existing procedures for consultation, but

⁵⁷ Minute by AW France, Treasury, 10 February, 1958. PRO CAB 21/3104 Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, 1958. Preparatory Meetings of Officials. [file 9/137/1 part 1]

this provided an opportunity to formally put forward and elaborate ideas already being developed.⁵⁸

(i) Trade Initiatives

In keeping with the government's objectives in calling the CTEC, trade matters started out as the main Canadian emphasis for the conference. The Diefenbaker trade diversion offer and the British free trade proposal meant that Canadian officials were already searching for methods to increase Commonwealth trade even before Commonwealth finance ministers agreed to hold the Montreal conference. Try as they might, Canadian officials could not overcome the conference's lack of economic substance. The proposals they presented at the CTEC preparatory meetings were neither particularly impressive nor very different from those already presented to the British government. They included enacting government purchasing policies giving Commonwealth producers preferential treatment over other non-domestic sources; enhancing government trade promotion activities like trade missions, trade fairs and trade commissions; revising customs procedures to ease tourist and business travel; and developing facilities for tourism.⁵⁹ The paucity of viable measures to increase Commonwealth trade was exemplified by the fact that the meager suggestions contained in the Canadian paper prepared for the second preparatory meeting emerged basically unchanged and

⁵⁸Minute from RC Griffiths to Sir D. Rickett, 14 February, 1958.
PRO CAB 21/3104.

⁵⁹CO(J)(58)25. CETC. Second Preparatory Meeting of Officials. Commonwealth Trade - Past, Present and Future. Memorandum by the Government of Canada, April, 1958. PRO CAB 133/193. CETC. Second Preparatory Meeting of Officials. Reports, Proceedings and Memoranda. [CO(J)(58)]

unaugmented in the final report of Commonwealth officials that served as the basis for conference discussions.⁶⁰

Canada's primary Commonwealth trade objective was the removal of export restrictions. Canadian ministers and officials badgered their British counterparts on this up until the conference started, even suggesting specific commodities where restrictions could be lifted to maximize the benefit to Canada.⁶¹ Their ending had been the declaratory policy of the Commonwealth as a whole since the 1952 Commonwealth Economic Conference, and since then the British government had eliminated restrictions on more than half its dollar imports as had Australia, which had recently announced a further freeing of ten percent of its imports to dollar area suppliers. The issue, however, underscored the difficulty of finding effective means specifically to develop intra-Commonwealth trade. This important Canadian objective was seen by proponents of closer Commonwealth trade links elsewhere, especially in Britain, as catering mainly to American interests at the expense of Commonwealth trade interests.⁶²

Conspicuously absent from the Canadian objectives for the CTEC were proposals for Commonwealth cooperation to counter American dominance of the international trading system. The 1952 economic conference had agreed to

⁶⁰Measures to Expand Trade Between Commonwealth Countries. Report by Officials, September, 1958. PAC RG 20 series A-3 vol 1942 file 20-118-13C-8 Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. Brief for Canadian Delegation.

⁶¹Fleming to Amory, 22 August, 1958, appended to GEN 650/36. Ministerial Committee on the CTEC. Non-Discrimination: Canadian Finance Minister's Letter to Chancellor of the Exchequer. Note by the Secretaries, 29 August, 1958. PRO CAB 130/149. Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference (May-October, 1958). [file GEN 650]

⁶²Telegram 2121 from George Drew, Canadian High Commissioner in Britain to Leger 5 July, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 294 file 50123-B-40.

make joint Commonwealth approaches to other governments, especially the United States, to press common concerns. In the spring of the 1958, however, senior American officials bluntly informed Canadian officials that joint Commonwealth action coming from or appearing to come from the CTEC would not be appreciated in either Congress or the administration. It would look too much like pushing the United States to save sterling from its chronic difficulties and the American administration was already predisposed to assist. A unilateral Canadian approach would be less suspect and even helpful because Canadian and American trading interests were so similar.⁶³ Ironically, just when Canada had a government filled with enthusiasm for Commonwealth cooperation, an avenue for visibly pursuing this was blocked.

The prospects for the conference succeeding solely on the basis its trade outcomes were not promising. This reflected the Commonwealth's, and thus the conference's, rather nebulous economic foundation. The report of the June preparatory meeting of officials, which was to serve as conference's main document, stated:

The principal economic objective of the Commonwealth is easy to identify and simple to state. It is to foster economic expansion throughout the Commonwealth... This can only come about in an expanding world economy and only if sterling, which is the currency in which the greater part of Commonwealth trade is conducted, is strong. From these conditions it follows that Commonwealth countries must be concerned not only with their own development, trade and currencies but also to encourage expansion of trade throughout the world, to reduce trade barriers and to promote a continued strengthening of sterling.⁶⁴

⁶³Memorandum from Rasminsky, to Fleming, 23 May, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 294 file 50123-B-40 part 4.

⁶⁴Report of the Preparatory Meeting of Officials, June 1958. PRO CAB 21/3105.

The difficulty, assuming that reducing trade barriers and strengthening sterling were always compatible, was identifying means, agreeable to all, by which Commonwealth members could do this. No one had been able to come up with much to supplement the Canadian trade proposals at the preparatory meetings. All generally subscribed to the idea of free multilateral trade and none were advocating the establishment of a discriminatory Commonwealth bloc. Indeed, the remnants of the 1932 Ottawa Agreements were fast crumbling as even Australia and New Zealand had shown desires to reduce or eliminate British preferences. As a gesture to the Canadian emphasis on non-discrimination and convertibility, just before the CTEC the British decided to announce a planned reduction in import restrictions on dollar area machinery at the Montreal conference.⁶⁵ Because of the Canadian government's reluctance to make any concessions to Britain, even to advance Diefenbaker's own trade diversion offer, there was no inclination to go beyond this.⁶⁶ The European trade negotiations could be relied upon to generate some economic discussions, but there was little of substance other than the development needs which the Commonwealth's newer members would press. The British government most emphatically did not want development to be the dominating theme at Montreal.⁶⁷ That would entail requests for money which the British government did not have, leaving open the possibility of no positive results for the conference. The problem that British officials had identified in the initial Canadian memorandum before Mont Tremblant

⁶⁵C.(58)178 Note by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Report by the Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, 5 September, 1958. PRO CAB 129/94 Cabinet Memoranda 1958.

⁶⁶GEN 650/36. Ministerial Committee on the CTEC. Non-Discrimination: Canadian Finance Minister's Letter to Chancellor of the Exchequer. Note by the Secretaries, 29 August, 1958. PRO CAB 130/149.

⁶⁷C.(58)178 Note by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Report by the Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, 5 September, 1958. PRO CAB 129/94 Cabinet Memoranda 1958.

remained - the agenda of the conference offered little scope for major innovations in Commonwealth economic relations.

Like their British counterparts, Canadian officials harboured grave doubts in this regard.⁶⁸ The Canadian ministerial committee preparing for the Montreal conference also bemoaned the failure of other Commonwealth members besides Canada to come up with ideas to increase trade. In the final week before the conference convened Cabinet considered and quickly discarded radical measures to generate increased Commonwealth trade such as restoring preferences - impossible under GATT - and forging a trade agreement with the British West Indies - too dangerous because immigration might follow.⁶⁹ Canadian ministers had to admit that, on the trade side, the prospects for the conference were depressing. There were some possible areas of progress such as a report from the Commonwealth Telecommunications Board on a round-the-world Commonwealth telephone cable, but in the absence of any major economic initiatives, much would depend on British proposals for consultative machinery and a series of mostly Canadian aid proposals.

(ii) Institutions for Cooperation and Consultation

At Mont Tremblant, the finance ministers had agreed that Commonwealth consultative machinery needed improvement. This meshed well with the need to ensure a successful outcome of the CTEC. Finding effective economic measures proved elusive but creating new institutions or reforming old ones would be visible accomplishments. As a result, in the lead-up to the Montreal

⁶⁸Garner to Laithwaite, 29 September, 1958. PRO CAB 21/3103 Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, 1958. [file 9/137]

⁶⁹PAC RG 2 series A5a vol 1899, Cabinet Conclusions, 7 September, 1958.

conference, Canadian officials, propelled by political necessity, submerged their traditional skepticism about Commonwealth institutions and joined with their ministers and British counterparts in generating a flurry of proposals to develop and use Commonwealth institutions.

To prepare for the CTEC, the Mont Tremblant meeting had ordered a review of Commonwealth economic bodies. Quite separately the CEC was embarking on a review as a result of the public undertakings of the 1957 CPMM and this, at Canadian insistence, was eventually incorporated into the CTEC process thereby increasing the number of possible successful outcomes. The most conspicuous institutional initiatives, however, came from British proposals. These reflected a combination of British domestic political requirements, the related need for a successful CTEC, and even substantive policy objectives. Canadian support for them reflected the Diefenbaker government's activist attitude towards the Commonwealth, but was mostly a result of wanting something to show for the CTEC. The result was, like the trade initiatives, a great deal of smoke and mirrors, but little that was actually new.

The first British idea to improve consultation was not for a new institution but to formalize existing practices. Meetings between senior Commonwealth officials had grown more frequent since the last Commonwealth Economic Conference in 1952. Annual meetings of finance ministers, with associated meetings of officials some months before, had taken place each autumn since 1954. The British government now sought to institute regular meetings of senior Commonwealth officials concerned with economic questions in the spring. Existing consultative institutions such as the CLC and the CEC relied on personnel from Commonwealth high commissions in London. The British were concerned that the unevenness of representation among the high

commissions, especially from the newer members, meant that discussions were not as productive as they might otherwise be.⁷⁰ Issues of great importance to Britain, such as the maintenance of sterling balance levels, were best considered by senior officials from the various capitals. Having meetings regularly instead of calling them on an ad hoc basis would avoid giving cause for speculation about an impending sterling crisis whenever the meetings were announced. It was a limited, but probably achievable, objective.

In the spring of 1958, a Malayan paper further spurred discussions on Commonwealth economic consultation and cooperation. This paper contained several ambitious institutional suggestions.⁷¹ It resurrected the idea of a Commonwealth development bank, but conceded that it might not be feasible. It did, however, advocate closer economic cooperation to help less developed members. Since finance ministers could not be expected to meet more than once a year, the Malayan paper suggested, like the British, instituting regular meetings of senior officials. To make these meetings more effective it proposed joint preparation via a Commonwealth economic secretariat controlled by Commonwealth governments through a standing Commonwealth Council. The secretariat would have no executive functions, but would help members whose resources did not allow them to independently monitor matters of current interest, especially those affecting sterling. The Malayan government had also noticed the unevenness of representation in London and, indeed, in the human resources available to newer members. More importantly, however, it felt that as a member of the Sterling Area with considerable

⁷⁰ Minute from Simmons to Davies, 12 November 1957. PRO DO 35/8488 Commonwealth Consultation 1957-9. [file EC 763/645/1]

⁷¹ CTEC. Paper by the Federation of Malaya. Commonwealth Consultation and Co-operation on Economic Matters. [n.d.]. PRO DO 35/8488.

sterling balances, it ought to be warned in advance of any move which might affect their value.⁷²

The British government was unwilling to consider anything like the Malayan secretariat proposal. There was no question of giving British secrets to a body outside of the British government's control and it deciding when and to what extent to transmit them to Commonwealth governments. A secretariat would not, therefore, have material on which to make independent judgements on matters such as the stability of sterling. The British view was that it would duplicate existing machinery, give British departments additional work and confuse lines of communication.⁷³ British officials, though confident that members would reject the Malayan proposals, were determined to push their own ideas on consultation.

The second preparatory meeting of officials for the CTEC took place in mid-June, 1958, again in London. There, a wide range of views on improving Commonwealth consultation was evident. Ghana joined Malaya in supporting the idea of a Commonwealth economic secretariat and Commonwealth council. At the other extreme, South Africa saw no need for anything new and India was only slightly more forthcoming.⁷⁴ The response to the less radical British idea of regular meetings of senior officials was more positive but still

⁷²Commonwealth Consultation. Country Positions. September 1958. PAC RG 20 series A-3 vol 1942 file 20-118-13C-8. Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, 1958. Brief for Canadian Delegation.

⁷³Minute from Rumbold to Crawley, 22 May, 1958. PRO DO 35/8488. See also: GEN 650/31 Cabinet Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. Commonwealth Economic Consultation, 29 August, 1958. PRO CAB 130/149 Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. [file GEN 650]; and Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation. Item VIII of the Agenda: Proposals for Improving Commonwealth Consultation, September, 1958. PRO DO 35/8488.

⁷⁴Cabinet Committee on the Commonwealth Conference. Minutes of a Meeting Held 9 July, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 294 file 50123-B-40 part 5.

unenthusiastic. Indian and South African, and to a lesser extent Pakistani, representatives were apprehensive that regular meetings with little to do would gradually extend the scope of their activities. The Ceylonese, Ghanaian, and Malayan representatives were supportive; the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian delegations only cautiously so. Before the meeting the head of the Canadian delegation had told Makins that the Canadians, having given a great deal of thought to Commonwealth institutions, sympathized with British objectives, but were not inclined to formalize existing practices unless there was a demonstrable advantage in doing so.⁷⁵ At the meeting, Malayan pressure for even more formal institutions created an incentive to accept the less dramatic proposal.

Faced with calls for more institutions on one side and no more on the other, British officials promoted a compromise which gave the appearance of greater structure without producing it. The periodic meetings of Commonwealth finance ministers would itself constitute a 'council' of sorts, with the name Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council (CECC), and other Commonwealth economic bodies, including the proposed meetings of senior officials would nominally report to this body.⁷⁶ British officials realized that agreement on regular meetings of officials might not be possible, so the council idea, even though not creating new consultative channels, would show some progress. Meetings of senior officials could be called under the guise of preparing for the ministerial meetings. At a weekend meeting of the

⁷⁵ GEN 630/7th Meeting. United Kingdom Delegation to Preparatory Meetings of Officials. Record of Meeting 2 June, 1958. PRO CAB 130/143 Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. United Kingdom Delegation to the First Preparatory Meeting of Officials (February-June, 1958). [file GEN 630]

⁷⁶ GEN 650/16 Cabinet Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. Commonwealth Consultation. 23 July, 1958. PRO CAB 130/148.

British cabinet committee at Home's country estate, Dorneywood, to review preparations for the CTEC in late July, 1958, the ministers considered the best strategy to gain agreement for the idea.⁷⁷ They decided to make preliminary approaches to the Canadian and South African governments, to ensure the support of the former and in the hope of persuading the latter not to actively oppose the idea.

At Dorneywood British ministers also accepted an idea to establish a Commonwealth centre in London. This would accommodate the various Commonwealth institutions and any Commonwealth meetings held in London, and provide a visible focus for the Commonwealth without creating new institutions. The headquarters idea, however, was purely secondary to getting agreement for the CECC. When Makins mentioned the CECC idea to Canadian officials in discussions on 1 August he stressed this point. The Canadians received both ideas favourably and undertook to bring them to the attention of Canadian ministers but thought the ideas needed more elaboration before being presented at the CTEC. The headquarters was the perfect complement to the other British proposals, such as the CECC, which the Canadians supported. Neither government wanted anything ambitious like the Malayan proposal. The British proposals, like the CTEC itself, as Amory, now the Chancellor of the Exchequer, told his cabinet colleagues at the final cabinet meeting to review British policy on the conference, would be mainly political and psychological.⁷⁸ The "presentational advantages"⁷⁹ of proposals such as the CECC would try to hide their lack of substance.

⁷⁷Record of an Informal Meeting Held at Dorneywood on Saturday, 26 July, 1958. PRO CAB 21/3106.

⁷⁸C.C.(58)70(3) Commonwealth Affairs: Conference at Montreal - U.K. Policy, 8 September, 1958. PRO CAB 128/32 part 2 Cabinet Conclusions.

⁷⁹Ibid.

(iii) Development Assistance Initiatives

Soon after the Mont Tremblant meetings, DEA officials identified one area where Canadian initiatives could make an impact. Both Diefenbaker and Fleming had made strong statements there about the importance of providing assistance for the Commonwealth's developing members. Aid proposals had the added advantage that they could be justified by more than merely reference to the CTEC but as part of a coherent external policy for combatting communism and contributing to political and economic stability in Asia and Africa.⁸⁰ Officials, therefore, compiled a review of Canadian assistance programmes for the newly installed SSEA, Sidney Smith.⁸¹ It showed that Canadian aid programmes were overwhelmingly concentrated on Commonwealth recipients. In 1957, Canada contributed US\$2 million to United Nations technical assistance programmes compared with C\$34 million to Commonwealth countries, most of it through the Colombo Plan. There were also plans underway to extend new assistance programmes to the BWI and Ghana. The Liberal government had fallen before final approval had been granted to these so they could serve as 'new' proposals for the CTEC. As bilateral programmes, they would maximize goodwill for Canada and strengthen economic links between the recipients and Canada while at the same time indirectly fostering goodwill for the Commonwealth. They were, in other words, ideal vehicles for promoting Western interests through the Commonwealth in a way which would assist in drawing on Commonwealth relationships by Canadian diplomats elsewhere, while

⁸⁰ Memorandum to Cabinet: Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, 4 September, 1958. PAC RG 2 vol 2741 file C-20-5 Cabinet Documents 1958.

⁸¹ Draft Memorandum for the Minister. Commonwealth Economic Aid, 19 December, 1957. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 539 file 14020-W1-40 part 3. Canadian Foreign Aid to Other Countries - West Indies (1957-8).

at the same time giving some prospect of economic benefit for both Canada and the recipients.

Because the aid plans were already developed, speedy Cabinet approval was easy. Smith presented them to Cabinet in January, 1958,⁸² and by the beginning of March the largest single element in the package, the ship worth C\$2.5 million for the BWI had been approved.⁸³ Diefenbaker announced this in the House of Commons on 10 March, 1958, as an indication of Canada's commitment to Commonwealth development before the CTEC. The BWI programme was just one part of a three-pronged Canadian aid package for the Montreal meeting in place as the May, as the second preparatory meeting of officials approached.⁸⁴ Canadian ministers would also announce increased contributions to the Colombo Plan and the extension of aid to other developing members not included in the first two elements.

Officials at DEA had also reviewed the idea of a Commonwealth development bank which the Malayan paper had recently resurrected. The Canadian objections articulated in the spring of 1957 had not changed, nor had their preference for bilateral aid. Accordingly they advised the minister that agreement was unlikely so Canada need not support the idea, although they would monitor developments. Smith concurred with this assessment but as it turned out, the idea was far from dead.

⁸²Memorandum to Cabinet by the SSEA, Interim Arrangements for Technical Assistance for the West Indies and Ghana, 16 January, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 529 file 14020-W1-40 part 3.

⁸³PAC RG 2 series A5a vol 1892 Cabinet Conclusions, 4 March, 1958.

⁸⁴Sidney Smith, SSEA to Fleming, 21 May, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 294 file 50123-B-40 part 4.

For the Macmillan government, the Malayan suggestion was rather fortuitous. The British government was wrestling with the problem of its role in Commonwealth development. In view of Commonwealth governments' previous rejection of the idea of a Commonwealth development bank, the British government had identified the Colonial Development Finance Corporation, a quasi-public British body, as the best means to meet continuing British obligations to former dependencies under the new name Commonwealth Development Finance Corporation (CDFC).⁸⁵ The problem was getting sufficient funds for the endeavour. A British ministerial committee studying the issue had arrived at two possible schemes. The first was to refloat the idea of a Commonwealth development bank capitalized through subscriptions from Commonwealth governments.⁸⁶ The other was for the CDFC to receive an injection of British government funds with other Commonwealth governments, particularly the Canadian government, approached as well.⁸⁷ Most of the members of the committee felt that the bank idea would require more funds from Britain, but was more likely to appeal to Commonwealth members. The British government decided to have officials at the second preparatory meeting sound out the Canadians first, then to offer the idea not as a firm proposal but as a topic for discussion.⁸⁸ The Malayan paper provided a cover under which the topic could be raised without identifying it with the British government. The June preparatory meeting dealt with the

⁸⁵Great Britain. The United Kingdom's Role in Commonwealth Development. Cmnd 237. (London: HMSO, July 1957). p. 17.

⁸⁶GEN 650/3 Cabinet Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. Commonwealth Development Bank. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 21 May, 1958. PRO CAB 130/148

⁸⁷GEN 650/5 Cabinet Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. Commonwealth Development Finance Corporation. Memorandum by the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, May, 1958. PRO CAB 130/148

⁸⁸Minute to Prime Minister, Commonwealth Development Bank, May 1958. PRO CAB 130/148

concept of a Commonwealth development bank informally in a special group. There, the Canadians took a prominent part in raising objections to the idea.⁸⁹ The problem was left open for the politicians to address.

Yet unbeknownst to Canadian officials at the time of the preparatory meeting, this had already happened. While visiting Ottawa earlier that June, Macmillan had raised the subject with Diefenbaker.⁹⁰ Diefenbaker, once again out of step with both his officials and his ministers, had agreed on the desirability of some form of Commonwealth financial institution. The general attitude in the Commonwealth remained that a Commonwealth development bank served no useful purpose, but the British government followed-up Diefenbaker's positive response to the idea of a financial institution like a bank by suggesting that Canada help fund an expanded CDFC. The Canadian ministerial committee preparing for the CTEC noted both officials' reservations about a Commonwealth financial institution and the prime minister's enthusiasm for one. Officials warned that splitting Canadian contributions between a joint fund and the other initiatives would make each portion appear small. This struck a chord among ministers who appreciated the publicity value of aid expenditures.⁹¹ Revamping the CDFC was even less enthusiastically than creating a new joint institution. The CDFC was not really an aid agency. Its loans were on a commercial basis and thus for projects which could presumably raise funds on the open market. As an alternative to the expected British proposal for some form of Commonwealth

⁸⁹Aide Memoire: Commonwealth Officials Conference. Note by the Chairman Sir Roger Makins, 23 June, 1958. PRO CAB 21/3105.

⁹⁰GEN 630/18th Meeting. United Kingdom Delegation to Preparatory Meeting of Officials. Record of Meeting Held 17 June, 1958. PRO CAB 130/143.

⁹¹Cabinet Committee on the Commonwealth Conference. Minutes of Meeting 28 July, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 294 file 50123-B-40 part 5.

financial institution, the Canadian ministers considered the idea of a 'soft' loan fund on the same lines as a contemporaneous American proposal for an International Development Association (IDA) associated with the World Bank. The fund would make loans, repayable in local currency, on easy terms approaching those of a grant. It would require annual contributions from donors but would not compete with the World Bank, reducing the danger of that body withdrawing from Commonwealth countries.⁹² Canadian officials explored this idea with their British counterparts but received no support. Without British participation, the fund was not viable and Canadian officials did not pursue the matter.⁹³

The British proposal, when it did come in August, was to expand the CDFC through capital subscriptions from either Commonwealth governments or central banks. Diefenbaker was extremely disappointed by this apparent British change of heart over a Commonwealth development bank despite Fleming's efforts to explain the difficulties of such a proposal.⁹⁴ Cabinet rejected Canadian participation in the CDFC scheme but remained open to the slim hope of a Commonwealth development fund. The ministers, despite officials' advice officials, were prepared to divert the proposed increase in the Canadian contribution to the Colombo Plan to a Commonwealth development institution should other governments agree. In the absence of this, there were the other

⁹²Memorandum: Canadian Aid to Commonwealth Countries. Proposals for Montreal Conference, July, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 294 file 50123-B-40 part 5.

⁹³Brief prepared by the Department of Finance for the Canadian Delegation to the Canada-U.K. Continuing Committee, Ottawa, 2-3 July, 1959. Item 5: Overseas Investment and Aid. Commonwealth Development Advisory Group, 26 June, 1959. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 485 file 12546-40 part 1. Commonwealth Development Agency and Bank.

⁹⁴PAC RG 2 series A5a vol 1899, Cabinet Conclusions, 7 September, 1958.

Canadian aid initiatives and a planned Canadian increased contributions to the World Bank and IMF which could be announced.⁹⁵

The month before the CTEC, a scholarship scheme, to be proposed jointly with Britain, joined the list of Canadian aid proposals. At the Dorneywood meeting which adopted the CECC idea, there was also a report advocating positioning Britain as a centre for scientific and technical training for Commonwealth students.⁹⁶ This reflected ideas emanating from a recently concluded study⁹⁷ on Britain's future in world affairs prepared in the Foreign Office, the CRO and the Treasury. The CRO emphasized the importance of maintaining Commonwealth cohesion throughout this exercise, and one relatively inexpensive method they had identified for doing so was by promoting educational, cultural and scientific exchanges and encouraging the continued use of English in former British dependencies.⁹⁸ As part of this, ministers agreed that at Montreal Britain propose a Commonwealth education conference.⁹⁹ As Britain already made substantial contributions to the training and education of Commonwealth students, the initiative was able to draw attention to this, thereby reducing the need for additional

⁹⁵ Memorandum to Cabinet: Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference, 4 September, 1958. PAC RG 2 vol 2741 file C-20-5 Cabinet Documents 1958.

⁹⁶ GEN 650/10 Cabinet Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. The United Kingdom as a Training Centre for Commonwealth and Overseas Students, 23 July, 1958. PRO CAB 130/148.

⁹⁷ The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs. Report by Officials, July 1958. PRO CAB 130/153 The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs. [file GEN 659]

⁹⁸ ZP 9/9/G Future Policy. Brief for a meeting on February 4, 3 February, 1958. PRO FO 371/135625 Future of the United Kingdom in World Affairs.

⁹⁹ Record of an Informal Meeting Held at Dorneywood on Saturday, 26 July, 1958. PRO CAB 21/3106.

expenditure. Like the CECC, the education proposals would neatly re-wrap the old with the new to produce a greater impact for little effort.

The Canadians responded to the British education proposal with one of their own. On 25 August, Canada House passed the CRO a telegram advising the British that the Canadian government wanted to propose a scholarship and fellowship programme.¹⁰⁰ In view of the British government's own education proposals, the Canadian government suggested they co-sponsor the scholarship scheme. This idea had the merits of contributing to continuing Commonwealth cohesion via shared educational experiences and assisting in economic development while at the same time making use of surplus educational opportunities in Canada which were more easily made available than surplus capital.¹⁰¹ Thus, the crowning touch on Anglo-Canadian cooperation at Montreal would be a joint proposal.

The package of aid proposals which the Canadian government had devised for the CTEC meant that there was now substantial 'progress' possible at the conference. Together with the anticipated British proposals on consultation, which the Canadian delegation would support in preference to the more elaborate Malayan alternative,¹⁰² and the recommendations on the CEC, there would be much coming out of the Montreal conference, but very little to do with trade.

¹⁰⁰ Cabinet Ministerial Committee on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. Training of Commonwealth Students in the United Kingdom, 4 September, 1958. Annex A: Telegram from DEA to Canadian High Commission in Britain, 21 August, 1958. PRO CAB 130/149.

¹⁰¹ Special Meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on External Aid Policy. Minutes, 17 April, 1959. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/360 vol 27 file 8260-13-40 par 1. Commonwealth Scholarship Programme.

¹⁰² Commonwealth Consultation. Canadian Position. September, 1958. PAC RG 20 Series A-3 vol 1942 file 20-118-13C-8.

The Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference and its Results

The CTEC met in Montreal for two weeks at the end of September, 1958. Forebodings about its economic and trade results proved accurate. The conference's theme of an expanding Commonwealth in an expanding world, taken from the report of officials, recognized that members' economic growth largely depended on factors outside the Commonwealth. The small advances in some areas did little to justify a trade conference. The Canadian proposals on trade promotion and government procurement were accepted, but for the most part, the discussion simply reviewed current economic conditions. British representatives reviewed the progress of the European negotiations for other members and all concerned reiterated the need for ongoing consultation on the subject. The Canadian and British governments announced their intentions to maintain current preferences, the Canadians for British goods and Australian and New Zealand lamb, and the British for nearly all Commonwealth goods. As well, several countries undertook to review mutual trading agreements. Australia, which had recently reviewed its agreements with Britain, Ceylon and Malaya, agreed with Canada to review their agreement, and began talks to this end with New Zealand and some of the dependent territories. New Zealand and Britain informed the conference of the review of their agreement. Canadian representatives had preliminary discussions with British and West Indian representatives over a freer trade agreement with the BWI, but wanted to wait for progress towards a customs union in the Federation of the West Indies before proceeding. Canada also agreed to begin preliminary talks with India and Pakistan towards reciprocal agreements on avoiding double taxation. On the big issue as the Canadian government saw things, most of CTEC participants insisted that they still required import restrictions and dollar area discrimination to protect their balance of payments. The one bright

spot was the announcement by Sir David Eccles, the President of the Board of Trade, of Britain's intention to free additional imports from restrictions. While short of Canadian demands, Garner could report afterwards that Fleming and Diefenbaker seized it gratefully as proof of the conference's success.¹⁰³

The conference's real successes came in areas other than trade. The delegates "agreed that development [was] vital not only to the economic expansion of the Commonwealth but to the whole structure of relationships within the Commonwealth."¹⁰⁴ Development was also vital to providing the Commonwealth with visible signs of a successful conference. The topic of Commonwealth financial institutions met with no more success than in the past. No one denied that the idea of a Commonwealth development bank was attractive in principle, but the same practical problems remained. Rather than dismiss the idea entirely, however, delegates agreed that it should be studied further at a meeting of senior officials in May, 1959. Britain announced the availability of loan facilities through both the government and the CDFC, but only India, South Africa and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland indicated any willingness to participate in the British proposal for the CDFC.

The big successes, however, came with the Canadian proposals. These were unveiled by Fleming on 22 September, in the wake of the delegates'

¹⁰³Garner to Laithwaite, 29 September, 1958. PRO CAB 21/3103.

¹⁰⁴Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference. Report of the Conference. Cmnd 539. (London: HMSO, October, 1958) p. 12.

decision to defer consideration of a Commonwealth development bank.¹⁰⁵ Fleming acknowledged the difficulties of creating a development bank but recalled Diefenbaker's desire that the conference should nevertheless try to encourage development. To that end the Canadian government, proceeding bilaterally pending the final decision on a bank, would increase the Canadian contribution to the World Bank by C\$325 million and double its IMF quota to C\$300 million. He also announced that the Canadian government would allocate an initial sum of C\$500,000 to African aid, ask Parliament to raise Canada's Colombo Plan contributions by half in the coming three years from a planned C\$35 million to C\$50 million and extend C\$10 million over five years to the BWI. Notwithstanding the fact that the Canadian government would now require Colombo Plan recipients to take one quarter of the Canadian contribution in the form of wheat so as to help prairie wheat farmers market their surplus production, the Canadian assistance package was a tremendous lift to the conference.

The British and Canadian proposals on education constituted other significant development initiatives. In his address on Canadian aid, Fleming announced that the Canadian government would underwrite one quarter of the new Commonwealth scholarship scheme (worth approximately C\$1 million). The British government undertook to cover half of it and to host a Commonwealth meeting on education the following year. This meeting would formulate the details of the Commonwealth scholarship and fellowship programmes as well as review existing arrangements for cooperation between Commonwealth countries in education and make recommendations for improving or expanding them.

¹⁰⁵ Telegram from the Canadian Delegation to the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference to the Department of External Affairs, 22 September, 1956. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 486 file 12546-40 part 1.

The other British initiatives also met with approval. The conference adopted the report of officials on economic consultation including suggestion for creating a Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council. As British officials had anticipated, the suggestion for regular meetings of senior officials did not gain agreement for anything more than the principle of holding meetings of senior officials to prepare for the ministerial meetings. The conference adopted the report of the CEC on the British inspired expansion of its activities and accepted the British offer to provide a Commonwealth House in London for Commonwealth meetings and to house Commonwealth bodies. To this modest list of accomplishments promoting Commonwealth cooperation could be added the conference's approval of the recommendations of the 1958 Commonwealth Telecommunications Conference. This called for a modernization of existing communications links through the construction of a new round-the-world telephone cable system. That such an ancillary development constituted a noteworthy accomplishment of an economic and trade conference further testified to the paucity of substantive measures in the areas which were to have been the conference's main focus.

Perhaps the most astonishing outcome of the Montreal CTEC was that in the end, it was deemed an "outstanding success"¹⁰⁶. It was, however, "a success more in terms of the general atmosphere and of the formulation of an attitude of mind than in any striking practical results achieved."¹⁰⁷ The painstaking Canadian and British efforts beforehand had provided enough positive visible accomplishments to overcome the lack of economic substance. At the conference itself, Canadian ministers, especially Fleming, went to great lengths to ensure that any positive aspect was played up and developed.

¹⁰⁶Garner to Laithwaite, 29 September, 1958. PRO CAB 21/3103.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

The British statement on the relaxation of dollar discrimination in some areas did not come anywhere near Canadian demands in this area, but both Diefenbaker and Fleming, for domestic political purposes, made the most of it. Notwithstanding any other developments, this help to ensure that Canadian political objectives were met. When Diefenbaker spoke to the Commonwealth and Empire Industries Association in London at the beginning of November, he identified trade as the area where the conference had its greatest successes and highlighted the progress towards freer trade and payments contained in the British announcements.¹⁰⁸

For the British government, the efforts of British officials before the conference and especially the political importance to the Canadian government of the British announcement on import restrictions had added benefits beyond ensuring that the conference did not fail. In his immediate assessment following the end of the conference, Garner observed that "one of the most significant results of the Conference is that it has substantially sweetened Anglo-Canadian relations."¹⁰⁹ How this would translate into new co-operation between the British and Canadian governments remained to be seen.

Certainly the improved Anglo-Canadian relationship had no affect over the next year in areas such as the Canadian government's receptiveness to British proposals with respect to either the CDFC or Anglo-Canadian free trade. At the end of October and early November, 1958, the British government again approached the Canadian government to enquire if, in the

¹⁰⁸ John G. Diefenbaker, "Canada and the Commonwealth". Excerpts from a Speech to the Commonwealth and Empire Industries Association at the Royal Albert Hall in London, on November 4, 1958. Statements and Speeches 58/44. (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1958). p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

wake of the Montreal conference, it would be willing to join other Commonwealth members which had indicated a willingness to contribute to the CDFC.¹¹⁰ The Canadian government once more declined. The Canadian government promised that the Canadian representative on the World Bank's Executive Board would take a sympathetic attitude towards any request from the CDFC for a line of credit, but that was all.¹¹¹ The British government raised the issue again several times over the next year and each time the Canadian government declined to participate.¹¹²

In the related issue of a Commonwealth development bank, Diefenbaker's lingering support for the idea did not stop Cabinet from supporting the American idea for the creation of an International Development Association (IDA) alongside the World Bank. The Canadian government had no wish to block the idea of a Commonwealth bank, but it wanted to delay discussion to await the outcome of the IDA proposal.¹¹³ Despite this Canadian (and Australian) preference for waiting, a meeting of senior Commonwealth officials mandated by the Montreal conference to study the bank idea convened in May, 1959, and agreed to meet again in July, under the title Commonwealth Development Advisory Group, to consider the issue. At that meeting, the idea of a Commonwealth development bank was all but buried by talk of the new IDA.

¹¹⁰Outward CRO Telegram W.No.475 to Commonwealth High Commissions. Commonwealth Development Finance Company, 31 October, 1958. PRO DO 35/8481. Report and Follow-up Action on the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference 1958. [file EC 763/39/1]

¹¹¹Kenneth Goldschlag, Department of External Affairs, to Geoffrey Lamarque, First Secretary, United Kingdom High Commission in Canada, 25 November, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 485 file 12546-40 part 1.

¹¹²PAC RG 2 vol 2745 Cabinet Conclusions, 3 December, 1959.

¹¹³Rumbold to Makins, 5 March, 1959. PRO DO 35/8459. Commonwealth Consultation: Meetings of Senior Officials 1958-1959. [file EC 645/28/1]

Only Malaya and Ghana supported the idea.¹¹⁴ Finally, the annual meeting of Commonwealth finance ministers, now the CECC, met prior to the World Bank/IMF meetings and accepted in principle of the IDA over a Commonwealth bank. The Commonwealth development bank was now dead. With the Canadian Cabinet's acceptance, pending Parliamentary approval, in March, 1960, of Canadian membership of the IDA¹¹⁵, any prospect of Canadian participation in the CDFC was also dead.

The Canadian government was similarly unforthcoming to British overtures on trade matters. The Canadian government never proceeded beyond studying the idea of a free trade agreement with the BWI. Even more frustrating for the British government, following the Churchill trade mission, no new efforts to increase bilateral trade had been forthcoming from the Canadian government. The changes in the government's procurement directive announced just before the Montreal conference were suspended shortly afterwards for reasons associated with defence production arrangements with the United States even though the new directive explicitly exempted defence equipment. Macmillan raised the subject of defence purchases with Diefenbaker personally in early November when the Canadian prime minister visited London as part of a tour of European and Commonwealth countries. He suggested eliminating American specifications for Canadian defence purchases as a means to increase bilateral trade.¹¹⁶ Diefenbaker, basking in the glow of the successful Montreal conference and the grateful recipient of the timely British

¹¹⁴PAC RG 2 vol 2745 Cabinet Conclusions, 22 July, 1959.

¹¹⁵PAC RG 2 vol 2746 Cabinet Conclusions, 3 March, 1960.

¹¹⁶Conversation between Prime Minister Diefenbaker and Prime Minister Macmillan, 10 Downing Street, London, 3 November, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 25/2/88 vol 3523 file 12687-M-1-40. Prime Minister's Tour 1958: Discussions with Foreign and Commonwealth Leaders.

announcement on easing trade restrictions, politely turned the request aside.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, the Canadian government continued, for the time being, its quiet acquiescence to British policy on Europe.¹¹⁸

Six months after Garner's optimistic assessment of the state of Anglo-Canadian relations following the CTEC, Canadian hesitancy and foot dragging forced him to reconsider. At the beginning of March, he informed Home,

I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that in the foreseeable future it would not be wise to pin any hopes on the present Diefenbaker administration playing a broad and constructive role in our affairs.¹¹⁹

After eighteen months in power, including almost a year with its astonishing majority, the Diefenbaker government had shown little ability to grasp the complexities of dealing with policy in the long term. The Anglo-Canadian trade initiative was going nowhere and even Diefenbaker's fervent attachment to the Commonwealth seemed to be abating. Garner observed that the Commonwealth seemed to have lost much of its appeal following Diefenbaker's

¹¹⁷Despite charges made against previous Liberal governments by members of the Progressive Conservative Party since the end of the Second World War, Canadian defence relations with United States consolidated considerably under Diefenbaker. Almost immediately after assuming office, Diefenbaker approved the North American Air Defence Command Agreement with the United States which created a unified command for continental air defence. The Liberals had negotiated the treaty but hesitated to finalize it before the election for fear of being criticized over it. While the government was new and inexperienced at this point, in 1958 it further cemented the institutional links in defence through a Joint Ministerial Committee on Defence. Canada was also in the process of negotiating, in effect, a free trade area in military equipment via the Canada-United States Defence Production Sharing Agreement. Most notable, of course, was the cancellation of the 'Arrow' fighter programme and concomitant reliance on American made alternatives which culminated with Canadian acceptance of American nuclear weapons.

¹¹⁸See chapter 6.

¹¹⁹Garner to Home, Dispatch 6, 6 March, 1959. PRO DO 35/10792. Canadian Political Scene 1958-9. [file WES 24/1/1]

tour of it in late 1958.¹²⁰ Diefenbaker, although he was never to have a good personal rapport with the likes of Nehru that St. Laurent had enjoyed, valued personal relationships, so the chance to meet again with Commonwealth leaders was very important to him. Overall, however, his tour was something of a disillusioning experience. Coming so soon after the announcement of huge increases in Canadian aid, he was put off by what he saw as a "gimmie complex"¹²¹ in most Colombo Plan recipients he visited. His own government's exhibited an analogous fixation with its own interests, but the realities of the modern Commonwealth were educative in a perturbing way for a leader yearning for a golden age that never really existed.

As with his Commonwealth economic goals, Diefenbaker had not thought through his objective of how to increase Commonwealth cohesion either. He and his Cabinet found themselves balking at following through with Commonwealth commitments. The simple matter of announcing details of the new Commonwealth House in London sent the government into paroxysms of anxiety reminiscent of Mackenzie King. On 11 February, 1959, the British government informed other Commonwealth governments that the Queen had offered to make available Marlborough House for use as the Commonwealth centre agreed to at the CTEC. The British government wished to make an announcement to this effect in a week and wanted to coordinate the timing and content of its announcement with those which other Commonwealth governments might wish to make. Diefenbaker presented the matter to Cabinet for advice on whether he should make a similar statement in the Canadian House of Commons. Some

¹²⁰ Ibid.

For more details on the tour itself see: Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. pp. 54-83. Diefenbaker also discusses it in One Canada Volume II, of special note is his detailed account of conversations with Nehru pp. 104-5.

¹²¹ PAC RG 2 vol 2744 Cabinet Conclusions, 4 June, 1959.

ministers agreed that it would be singularly appropriate to acknowledge the Queen's generous gift in view of what it might mean for strengthening Commonwealth ties. Others felt that the action might be regarded as a move towards centralizing the Commonwealth and a reversion to colonialism. It would be better, then, not to draw attention to it. The Cabinet, of which sixteen out of seventeen members present were anglophones, decided against making an announcement.¹²² The British government announced the establishment of a Commonwealth centre; the Canadian government, despite the favourable reception it had given the idea before and during the Montreal conference, remained quiet.

Soon afterwards, the CECC became an even bigger problem for the Canadian Cabinet. The Montreal conference had agreed to establish the CECC to coordinate existing economic consultative machinery, but did not specify which of the many Commonwealth bodies should be subsumed within the new framework. In December, 1958, with the British government wanting to demonstrate the success of its Commonwealth policy in the face of domestic pressure, the CRO began consulting other Commonwealth governments as to which bodies should be included.¹²³ By April, 1959, there was agreement on: meetings of Commonwealth finance ministers, meetings of senior economic officials, the CLC, the CEC, and meetings of Commonwealth statisticians to review the Sterling Area's balance of payments. Members were still considering the inclusion of others, but the British government wanted to announce an upcoming meeting of senior economic officials within the context

¹²²PAC RG 2 vol 2744 Cabinet Conclusions, 17 February, 1959.

¹²³Memorandum from the Commonwealth Relations Office: Composition of the Commonwealth Economic Council, 10 December, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/360 vol 29 file 8490-B-40 part 1. Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council.

of the CECC.¹²⁴ It proposed that a public announcement be made to this effect on 16 April, 1959, and circulated a draft statement for approval by other governments.

On 14 April, Diefenbaker informed Cabinet of the proposed British statement on the CECC. Unlike the Marlborough House announcement in February, the prime minister, who ordinarily relished publicity, did not come to Cabinet thinking about whether he too should make a statement. Instead, he proceeded from where the earlier discussion had left off. At a time when his public speeches were becoming increasingly critical of the United States, he showed astonishing apprehension over being seen as too close to Britain, previously held out as a necessary balance to the United States. He told his colleagues that he thought many people in Canada would see the statement as an effort to centralize the Commonwealth with strong colonial overtones. He was convinced that anything giving the appearance of unifying the Commonwealth would be unacceptable and would weaken rather than strengthen Commonwealth ties.¹²⁵

Fleming, who had worked so hard to make the Montreal conference a success, disagreed. The finance minister argued that there was no new institutional machinery involved in the CECC and that all of the bodies concerned would still be purely advisory and consultative. He had seen the proposed announcement and from his perspective, the substance was satisfactory, even if the wording was "dull and uninteresting."¹²⁶

¹²⁴Commonwealth Economic Consultation. Note by Commonwealth Relations Office, 14 April, 1959. PRO DO 35/8448. Commonwealth Economic Consultation. [file EC 645/3]

¹²⁵PAC RG 2 vol 2744. Cabinet Conclusions, 14 April, 1959.

¹²⁶Ibid.

Nevertheless, for the second time in little over two months, the staunchly pro-Commonwealth, pro-British, Progressive Conservative government yielded to fears that it might be perceived as acceding to Commonwealth centralization. Cabinet, of which seventeen of twenty members present were anglophone, agreed to ask the British government to defer its announcement and asked Fleming to re-draft the statement. Mackenzie King's ghost, it seemed, had yet to be thoroughly exorcised.

The finance minister duly produced a revised statement acceptable to his cabinet colleagues. Canadian officials passed it to Earnscliff for consideration by the British and other Commonwealth governments. The revised Canadian text of the announcement met with approval and so on 21 April, 1959, with a week's delay, the birth of the CECC was formally announced.¹²⁷ The new statement, which also announced the meeting of senior Commonwealth economic officials, did not remove anything from the original; it added new emphasis. The focus shifted from the launch of a new Commonwealth cooperative endeavour to the fact it incorporated existing bodies in a new framework rather than creating any new ones. To reinforce this, the statement stressed that the existing bodies served extremely well and had no need to change.¹²⁸ Whether or not this was attributable to the redrafting, no outcry followed. Pearson, now the Leader of the Opposition, was well aware of how Commonwealth consultation worked and in the absence of new machinery observed:

¹²⁷ Memorandum from Robertson, USSEA, to Diefenbaker, 21 April, 1959. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/360 vol 29 file 8490-B-40 part 1.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Attachment: Statement to be Made in the House of Commons on April 21: Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council and Meeting of Senior Economic Officials.

I do not think we should attach too great importance to the fact that this decision has been taken and has been implemented because commonwealth (sic) economic consultation¹²⁹ is going on effectively now and has been for a good many years.

The government's instinctive recoiling from anything which might be construed as subordinating Canada to greater Commonwealth integration, highlighted the fact that in many areas there was considerably more continuity with Liberal Commonwealth policy than the Progressive Conservatives might have admitted.

After being discreetly understated in the preparations for the CTEC, traditional patterns of behaviour re-emerged in Canadian approaches to the Commonwealth. This was especially evident in the follow through on the Montreal conference's recommendations on education. The Canadian government had taken a leading role, along with Britain, in developing the initiatives presented to the CTEC. The scholarship proposal in particular had been seen as a way to create lasting Commonwealth bonds through pan-Commonwealth action; the details as to how it would be implemented, however, had been left for future discussion. The meeting at which this was to be done was organized by the British government and was convened at Oxford between 15-28 July, 1959.

The Canadian position on the education conference as drafted by DEA and accepted by Cabinet was indistinguishable from what might have come from the St. Laurent government. Regarding administrative arrangements for the scholarship scheme, DEA envisioned the need for a small secretariat to administer the programme in Canada, but assumed that the scheme would operate

¹²⁹Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (2nd Session, 24th Parliament, vol III, April 21, 1959) p. 2878.

on an essentially bilateral basis.¹³⁰ That being the case, there was no need to establish a central coordinating agency specifically to administer the scholarship scheme. As DEA and Cabinet saw things, only minimal coordinating functions might be required, such as, putting applicants in touch with the various facilities throughout the Commonwealth and keeping records of awards made under the programme. If necessary, thought could be given to designating an existing body, such as the non-governmental Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth (AUBC), to look after the arrangements. The Canadian delegation would not, however, go to Oxford without something to offer. In the area of teacher training, the Canadian delegation would offer to organize teams of teachers to assist teacher training institutions and to send Canadian specialists in subjects such as mathematics and the sciences to conduct courses for teachers in other Commonwealth countries which required assistance.

The Canadian delegation was only partially successful in achieving its objectives at Oxford. The recommendations which emerged from discussion stated that since the initiatives agreed at Montreal would require the expenditure of at least £10 million over the first five years, about half of which would be for the scholarship scheme, some form of administrative machinery was needed. When it became evident that avoiding machinery was impossible, Canadian efforts turned to minimizing it.¹³¹ The Canadian delegation succeeded in gaining agreement that arrangements for the scholarship plan would ordinarily be made through bilateral contacts between

¹³⁰Memorandum to Cabinet: Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme, 25 March, 1959. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/360 vol 27 file 8260-13-40 part 1. Commonwealth Scholarships Program.

¹³¹Memorandum from D Hudon, DEA, to Plumptre, 23 November, 1959. PAC RG 19 vol 4921 file 8265-04. Commonwealth Organizations: Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit (1959-66).

Commonwealth governments or bodies nominated by Commonwealth governments to administer the scheme. The AUBC would perform any coordination needed so no new organization was needed. Thus, the largest programme considered by the conference would be administered autonomously, but the conference also considered cooperation in teacher training and technical education. The Canadian proposals could operate bilaterally, and an elaborate New Zealand proposal for a teacher training organization was rejected. But, outside of the Canadian delegation, there was general support for the position that in other areas discussed at the conference, more institutional machinery was required.¹³² Accordingly, a new committee would be established, based in London and composed of a representative from each Commonwealth member with a small secretariat associated with it. This new body would assist, not replace, the bilateral contacts favoured by Canadian delegation. The scholarships scheme was administered separately, but the AUBC was directed to report annually to the new organization on the programme's progress.

The details of the new institutions were not finalized at Oxford. Yet another meeting was planned for October in London for this. At this meeting, Canada was represented by George Drew, the high commissioner to Britain. The former leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was a long-time advocate of closer ties with Britain and the Commonwealth whose appointment as high commissioner in 1957 was part of the new government's initial outburst of Commonwealth enthusiasm. Drew still supported strengthening Commonwealth ties and while in Ottawa just prior to the London meeting had discussed the course of action to take with Green, now SSEA. Both agreed that the new institution needed a clear definition of responsibility and all appropriate

¹³²Commonwealth Education Conference, Report of the Conference. (Cmnd 841) (London: HMSO, August, 1959) p. 13.

machinery. Canada would have to continue to take the initiative, not only because important parts of the new Commonwealth programme in education were Canadian ideas, but also because the Canadian government wanted as much say as possible in how the Canadian contribution would be administered.¹³³

Despite Canadian resistance to a new education institution, other Commonwealth governments recalled the record of Canadian initiatives in education. At the October meeting which finalized the establishment of the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee (CELC) and Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit (CELU), the British government suggested that the Canadian government nominate a candidate to head the institution. Officials in DEA, conscious of Canada's initial resistance to the new institution were not inclined to do so,¹³⁴ but Diefenbaker had no such hesitation. A Commonwealth organization possibly being perceived as having control over Canadian policy was one thing; a Canadian heading a Commonwealth organization was quite another. Acceding to this pressure, officials investigated the matter, but found no qualified candidate willing to go to London for the specified term and salary.¹³⁵ The prime minister, however, still extracted positive publicity out of the education plan. In the Speech from the Throne to open Parliament on 14 January, 1960, the Commonwealth scholarship scheme

¹³³ Telegram 3246 from Drew to Robertson, 23 October, 1959. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 227 file 14020-C14-6-40 part 1. Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee and Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit - Organization and Activities.

¹³⁴ Memorandum from Hudon to Plumptre, 23 November, 1959. PAC RG 19 vol 4921 file 8265-04.

¹³⁵ Note to file, 26 February, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 227 file 14020-C14-6-40 part 1.

figured prominently as an example of Canadian aid to the under-developed members of the Commonwealth.¹³⁶

Diefenbaker did well to take positive publicity where he could from his initial spree of Commonwealth activity. The aid programmes were the only lasting success to come out of what overall was a failed policy. The Progressive Conservative government had come into office in June, 1957, resolved to reverse what it saw as its Liberal predecessor's pernicious complicity in reducing the Commonwealth's role in the world. But despite its determination to effect a fundamental change in Canada's relations with the Commonwealth, remarkably little had changed after three years. The Canadian government retained a marked preference for working bilaterally within the Commonwealth framework, especially in the area of development assistance, and a strong resistance to anything hinting of policy coordinating institutions or any form of limitation on Canada's and Canadians' freedom of action through Commonwealth commitments. The reluctance to really change the direction of Canadian trade policy, for example, torpedoed any chance of success there. The government could point to some growth in Canada's trade with Britain and the fact that between 1958 and 1960 it grew at a slightly faster rate than Canada's trade with the United States. Nevertheless, this did not approach the magnitude desired by the government and did not alter the long term trend of Canadian trade patterns.¹³⁷ Indeed, other factors such as the coincidental relaxation of British exchange controls make it difficult to attribute even this small change to the government's policy.

¹³⁶"Intra-Commonwealth Scholarships: Canadian Idea for Aid Programme," The Times. (London) 15 January, 1960.

¹³⁷See Appendix I "Canadian Trade Patterns".

The cherished goal of increasing Canada's trade with the Commonwealth and reducing economic dependence on the United States had failed completely.

For all practical purposes, Canada was just as reliant on the United States as before. Indeed, despite growing friction in Canada-US relations from the same sort of erratic behaviour by Diefenbaker which frustrated the British government, Canada was even more tightly tied to the United States than before. The NORAD agreement, the defence production agreement, and a new ministerial defence coordinating committee all testified to Canada's growing policy engagement with the United States. Conservative policy had set out to reverse this, but it failed.

A variety of factors underlay this failure. The enthusiasm for the Commonwealth was not accompanied by a matching effort to think the policy through and analyze its implications. Diefenbaker's reckless trade diversion offer was just the most blatant example of this. More generally, the Commonwealth trade initiative and the appropriate role for the Commonwealth in Canadian policy had not been analyzed beyond its normative desirability to ministers. Problems arose because the ministers in the new government knew that they wanted the Commonwealth to address what they saw as Canada's economic problems, but they did not know how it was supposed to accomplish this. The package officials patched together in response to Diefenbaker's trade diversion offer did not materially differ from the proposals that the Canadian government was able to offer at the Montreal conference. Under the circumstances, given the Canadian interest in continuing to build the international trading system and not antagonize the United States or sacrifice Canada's economic development, there was little alternative. Fortunately for official sensibilities, the government's ideological drive to

convene the CTEC, was not enough to overcome these. The government had not thought beyond its promise to have a trade conference to thinking about what the conference would do. The result was a conference long on trade generalities but short on concrete outcomes.

For a 'Commonwealth-minded' government, Diefenbaker and his colleagues showed little in the way of Commonwealth vision. The primacy of domestic politics which at all times characterized their efforts, even after their resounding electoral victory in March, 1958, differed little from other Commonwealth governments. Certainly, contemporaneous British initiatives were made with an eye to domestic politics. But, in the Canadian government's case, its single-minded fixation on, and pursuit of, domestic concerns reached the level where it interfered with Commonwealth relations. For domestic reasons, the government, overriding official advice and past Canadian practice, dragged the entire Commonwealth to a trade and economic conference. Having done so, it failed to present any bold trade measures there because to do so would have seriously risked damaging the Canadian economy. So too, any hope that something positive could have been salvaged from the British trade initiatives, such as a limited trade deal with Britain, was dashed by the Canadian government's anxieties over possible domestic reaction. Consequently, the only outcome of a process which risked antagonizing Canada's primary trading partner was to frustrate a government with which the Canadian government was allegedly seeking closer ties. Even when wrestling with decisions as trivial announcing the previously and publicly agreed establishment of a Commonwealth centre and the CECC, the government was paralyzed by political anxiety. This may have been exaggerated, but the government did well to worry over the political and economic effects of actually implementing its declared Commonwealth policy.

Behind the Diefenbaker government's inability to develop workable economic proposals and unwillingness to act on what measures were there for consideration was the simple fact that the Commonwealth with which they had to work simply was not capable of solving such trade problems. If it were, they would have had less difficulty in developing proposals. Moreover, there would have been few political problems in having them implemented. Nothing succeeds like success, and finding new and expanded markets, or even the realistic prospect of them, is invariably popular. The government had unrealistic expectations of how Canada could use the Commonwealth bred from being too long in opposition. Important trade relationships still existed in the Commonwealth but they were not the product of recent history. As shown by Diefenbaker's colleagues' preoccupation at the 1957 CPMM with Britain's European trade arrangements showed, adjusting existing trading relations to changes in the global trading system was more salient to the modern Commonwealth than dramatic new endeavours to increase intra-Commonwealth trade.

The new Canadian policy objectives suffered from more than not being well conceived, they were not conceived with reference to the contemporary Commonwealth. The original Progressive Conservative trade policy had little prospect of success even had the government been willing to take enormous political risks. To have refocused Canadian trade towards the Commonwealth would have been a revolution to match the government's rhetoric. The government's conduct of this aspect of Commonwealth relations showed it to be anything but revolutionary, and with good reason.

The new government had some successes, but few innovations, in Commonwealth affairs. The idea of Commonwealth trade as a counterweight to

Canadian trade with the United States, and the Commonwealth as a general counterweight to the United States for Canada existed previously. They were historically secondary policy tendencies, but Diefenbaker made them key parts of his platform. In his government's efforts to win support for its economic objectives, it initiated more programmes than had its Liberal predecessor, but it ended up doing more of the same things. Like its predecessor, its generous Commonwealth aid contributions acknowledged the reality of the modern Commonwealth and the role it could be expected to play in Canadian policy. Even if Diefenbaker seemed unduly impressed at first by the presence of non-white leaders at a CPMM, he and his ministerial colleagues quickly grasped the importance of the newer members to the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, the fact that this "Commonwealth-minded government" had found it necessary to resist ambitious proposals for development institutions and generally preferred bilateral aid programmes within the Commonwealth demonstrated the essential continuity in Canadian policy. Diefenbaker's stubborn attachment to things like a Commonwealth development fund could not avoid the realities which were more easily overlooked in opposition. The Diefenbaker government devoted a great deal of attention to Commonwealth trade but its efforts were plagued by inconsistencies. The government's stated policy objectives were too far removed from the economic and political realities. Officials readily appreciated this, but ministers, especially the prime minister, grasped it only as efforts to implement policies ran up against their political interests. Invariably, when trying to reconcile Commonwealth dreams with electoral politics, politics won. The result was a policy of dead-end dreams which did not appreciably alter the nature of Canada's Commonwealth relations.

CHAPTER 5: THE WINDS OF CHANGE: THE COMING OF THE THIRD COMMONWEALTH

In Macmillan's famous "winds of change" speech to South Africa's Parliament on 3 February, 1960,¹ he was referring specifically to Africa, but the same winds were sweeping through the Commonwealth. They were bringing a new Commonwealth, the 'third' Commonwealth. The first consisted of Britain and independent states dominated by persons of European origin, sharing similar cultural and institutional backgrounds. The second began with the admission of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. It was multiracial and more diverse, but the new members had large populations and sophisticated civil and political structures. The next stage in Commonwealth development would come as the inexorable progress of decolonization transformed its membership structure. This had been discussed by the 'old' members in the mid-1950s and anticipated by Ghana's membership in 1957. Then, it was seen in terms of membership of poorer, less sophisticated, but sizeable, African states. As the third Commonwealth unfolded another element became apparent. To states, such as Nigeria, with much in common with the new members of the second Commonwealth, were added much smaller and weaker states. The challenge this poised for older members such as Canada was to ensure that the Commonwealth remained useful to them amidst this transformation.

Between 1959 and 1961 several issues arose which helped define the Commonwealth's future character and direction. These included how its membership structure would deal with new members and how it cope with their needs once in. In the third Commonwealth, new members not only continued to

¹Although the phrase is most famous for its use on this occasion, Macmillan had used it previously on his African tour of January and February, 1960. Harold Macmillan, Pointing the Way 1959-1961. (London: Macmillan, 1972) p. 124.

push for more aid, but, as the issue of South African membership showed, insisted on a greater role in shaping the Commonwealth's structure as well. The Canadian response to these changes demonstrated emphatically that the Commonwealth's most important function for Canadian policy was as a link to developing countries.

Determining The Nature of the Third Commonwealth: Membership and Structure

After a period between 1955 and 1957 when Commonwealth prime ministers met annually, there followed a lull with no CPMM until May, 1960. Thus, when Macmillan suggested a CPMM for 1960, his comment "that there are many important matters which could fruitfully be discussed"² was an understatement. Among the many issues, none had more importance for the Commonwealth's future than how to accommodate new members. Two countries were expected to seek membership in 1960: Nigeria and Cyprus. Nigeria posed little problem. Its independence had been anticipated since the mid-1950s and its size, population and resources recommended it as a significant addition to the Commonwealth. Cyprus was another matter.

Before Cyprus' prospective membership, Commonwealth governments anticipated that membership would grow in accordance with assumptions made in the mid-1950s. That is, by small numbers via the accession of large units. Indeed, a 1955 CRO memorandum on Commonwealth membership lumped Cyprus into a category of dependencies capable of internal self-government but which could

²Macmillan to Diefenbaker, 14 October, 1959. PRO DO 35/7949. Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting, 1960. Issue of Invitations. [file CON 93/16(1)]

not "aspire to the status of full Commonwealth membership."³ The British government, as the principle metropolitan power within the Commonwealth, could in most respects play the role of Commonwealth architect. It expected

an independent Commonwealth of sixteen members - all of them significant countries which could expect to exercise some influence in world counsels, to be viable economically, and to be worth-while partners in some regional defence system. So constituted the Commonwealth could continue to exert a powerful influence in the world.⁴

The Commonwealth prime ministers would continue to meet as equals, and together would possess considerable authority. Britain, the Commonwealth's leader, would be the major beneficiary of its influence. This model assumed small dependencies would remain that way. Cyprus, whose leaders refused to accept anything short of complete independence with full Commonwealth membership, called this into question.

Cyprus was a source of controversy for British governments long before its membership in the Commonwealth became an issue. In 1955, elements of the majority Greek population started a guerrilla campaign in support of union with Greece. In 1956, several Greek Cypriot leaders, including the Orthodox Archbishop, Makarios III, were exiled briefly. After Makarios' controversial return in 1957, the British government resumed its search for a compromise settlement which would meet the aspirations of the Greek population, protect the rights of the Turkish minority, and secure British strategic interests. By the autumn of 1959, a settlement was almost in place.

³ Memorandum: Future Membership of the Commonwealth, December, 1955. PRO DO 35/5060. Commonwealth Membership. [file CON 32/40/14]

⁴ Memorandum Brook to Macmillan, 26 April, 1960. PRO CAB 21/3160. Commonwealth Study Group: General, 1960. [file 10/4/83/1]

The Canadian government had followed events in Cyprus, but had not taken an active role. Administering colonies was entirely a British matter. But its approaching independence with possible Commonwealth membership made it a Commonwealth matter.⁵ In September, 1959, the British government sent Diefenbaker a memorandum setting out its view of Cyprus' future in the Commonwealth. It argued that with such a small area and population, Cyprus would have only a minor role in world affairs. Moreover, planned treaty arrangements with Turkey and Greece for what amounted to overseeing powers, implied Cyprus would not be fully sovereign. This could pose security problems for CPMMs because outside states might become privy to the discussions. Therefore, the British government recommended Cyprus be offered an association with the Commonwealth short of full membership.⁶ This status was not to set a precedent, but to reflect Cyprus' unique situation. This proposal did not surprise Diefenbaker or his officials. Indeed, Diefenbaker had indicated limited agreement with it before.⁷ He had done so, however, on the basis that it be used only as a starting point for preliminary talks. Like his Liberal predecessors, Diefenbaker had severe misgivings about tiered membership.

The formal presentation of the idea sparked more serious consideration of its implications. To the frustration of British officials, who objected that if the idea was suitable as a basis for preliminary talks the Canadians

⁵A more detailed account of Canadian policy towards the issue of Cypriot membership is contained in: Rory MacLeod, "Canadian Attitudes towards Cyprus Joining the Commonwealth", The Round Table. (October, 1993) pp. 391-6.

⁶Garner to Diefenbaker, 15 September, 1959. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 205 file 12833-40. Cyprus: Commonwealth Relations (1959-60).

⁷Note to file by D. Stansfield, Commonwealth Division, DEA, 30 November, 1959. PAC ACC 86-7/414 vol 205 file 12833-40.

could hardly complain if it was reflected in the final outcome.⁸ Diefenbaker's initial misgivings were strengthened by the advice of his officials. This acknowledged that a Cypriot prime minister would have little influence in the world, but considered that it might still be instructive for other Commonwealth leaders to sit down with him, and that by so doing would increase his ability to influence others.⁹ Anyway, CPMMs were already diluted in terms of the numbers present and subjects discussed compared with those of the late 1940s. Even then, in deference to India's nonalignment, members wishing to discuss defence arrangements met separately. Now, given the presence of a country like Ghana which Canadian officials considered a questionable security risk, there could be no reason for excluding Cyprus. Whether or not the British intended to set a precedent, it would. On balance there was more advantage to maintaining the Commonwealth's open character and not making distinctions on size any more than on colour or race.

Not seeing a valid reason for excluding Cyprus, Canadian officials suspected other factors behind the British preference for tiered membership. The controversial Makarios had been elected to head the post-independence government. Canadian officials believed that dislike for Makarios within the British government contributed to the effort to exclude him from CPMMs. When a DEA official mentioned this theory to an official at Earnscliff, he received the assurance that personal dislike did not influence officials. But the British official conceded that ministerial views might very well be affected.¹⁰

⁸Ibid.

⁹Memorandum to Prime Minister. Cyprus and the Commonwealth, 25 September, 1959. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 205 file 12833-40.

¹⁰Minute to File from S Morley Scott, Commonwealth Division, DEA, 7 January, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 205 file 12833-40.

The re-emergence of the idea of tiered membership reflected more than personal likes and dislikes of British ministers. Both the Canadian and British positions sought to maintain the Commonwealth's existing character. Where they differed was in defining what constituted the Commonwealth's most important characteristics. The British stress on the role of members in world affairs emphasized the Commonwealth as a political body and source of (British) influence. The Canadian stress on inclusivity, emphasized the Commonwealth as a functional body primarily for building relations with the developing world. Both sought influence, but the British sought a direct benefit from the Commonwealth itself, while the Canadians wanted to develop relationships through the Commonwealth, but for use elsewhere, such as at the United Nations.

Paradoxically, these divergent views manifested themselves in the opposite ways regarding the membership of Commonwealth agencies. At the same time as the British government was suggesting limits on which countries be accorded the privileges of full membership, it was advocating unlimited membership in all Commonwealth organizations.¹¹ There had never been any need before to have every Commonwealth member active in every subsidiary body but the British government saw it as a means of promoting greater identification with the Commonwealth among members.

Most Commonwealth bodies engaged primarily in information sharing so membership entailed little responsibility. But some, such as the Commonwealth Telecommunications Board (CTB), performed specialized technical activities and so membership was on a more formal basis. Under the terms of

¹¹Lamarque to OG Stoner, Economic Division, DEA, 6 January, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/336 vol 193 file 6231-40 part 14. Commonwealth Communications Council - Activities and Reports (1959-60).

the 1948 Commonwealth Telegraphs Agreement, for example, CTB membership was open only to those Commonwealth members with control over their own telecommunications. As a result, Pakistan, Malaya and Ghana were not members. Ghana was in the process of seeking associate membership pending the assumption of the required control and Malaya and Singapore, the latter not yet independent, had expressed reluctance to join until they had full control. The British government, anxious to achieve maximum participation in Commonwealth bodies, suggested that control over external telecommunications no longer be required and all Commonwealth members be allowed to join.

The Canadian government's response contrasted with its position on Commonwealth membership. While sympathetic to the idea of having as many Commonwealth members as possible participating in the CTB, Canadian officials questioned it on two points. Both stemmed from the fact that the Board had a defined function and controlled important assets. They queried:

(a) is it desirable to have an indefinite number of such countries, as and when they become independent, members of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Board with full power and voting rights on all matters pertaining to the successful management and operation of the entire Commonwealth telecommunications system in which they would have no financial investment?

(b) what effect, financial or otherwise, would nationalization of the facilities referred to in (a) have on the Commonwealth Telecommunications System?¹²

These objections came from the operational department concerned, the Department of Transport, and whereas the British proposals were political, the objections were functional. Canadian attitudes to Commonwealth and international organizations since 1945 consistently reflected this functional approach. The Canadian government agreed to join or revive Commonwealth

¹²JR Baldwin Deputy Minister, Department of Transport, to Robertson, 28 March, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/336 vol 193 file 6231-40 part 14.

bodies when they fulfilled a function best pursued in a Commonwealth milieu. Canadian governments rejected Commonwealth institutions where issues were best managed elsewhere. The fact that the Commonwealth was secondary to institutions such as NATO and the United Nations in Canadian foreign policy, it did not mean that the functions performed by Commonwealth organs were unimportant. These activities were either not done by other bodies, or were best done on a Commonwealth basis. For the Canadian government, Commonwealth bodies each had an activity defined function, not the political purpose of binding the Commonwealth together. Canada had, in keeping with the Diefenbaker government's initial exuberance for all things Commonwealth, accepted British tinkering with the CEC in 1957. Now the traditional Canadian attitude preferring the substance and function of a workable Commonwealth over procedural and institutional illusions asserted itself to preserve the character of functional relationships within the Commonwealth framework.

The Canadian government's principal interest in the Commonwealth as a whole was its 'bridging' role. Its main interest in Commonwealth subsidiary bodies was the functional task for which the body had been created. Broad membership facilitated the one, but gave authority with no responsibility or contribution in the other, possibly endangering the pursuit of the objectives that the Canadian government sought to achieve through the organization. Unlike the British view, the interests pursued in one part of the Commonwealth were not used to support those in another part. The differentiation of Canadian interests underscored the fact that Canada was not so much interested in the Commonwealth itself as it was in the tasks it fulfilled.

As the 1960 CPMM approached, the Canadian government devoted an uncharacteristic amount of attention to the Commonwealth's future. That there would be a third stage in the Commonwealth's development, the Canadian government had little doubt, but its form remained unknown.¹³ The transition to the third stage posed the same two questions as that from the first to the second: would new states want to remain associated with their formal colonial master and if so, how would this be achieved? The third Commonwealth's defining characteristic looked to be the addition of a considerable, but unpredictable, number of sovereign states "notably inferior in size, maturity and influence"¹⁴ to existing members. In 1960, aside from Cyprus and Nigeria, approximately fifteen other British dependencies were near the threshold of independence. Their populations ranged from the nine million of Tanganyika to the one hundred thousand of Western Samoa. There were an even greater number of smaller dependencies which might also eventually seek membership. The question for Canada and the other Commonwealth members at the time was: "How far [was] the maintenance within the Commonwealth fold of all existing territory reason for conceding equality of status? Or [were] there alternative forms of association?"¹⁵

Despite its reservations about membership restrictions, even the Canadian government had difficulty conceiving of a Commonwealth in which the smallest island state assumed the same position as existing members. The alternative, however, would be for the Commonwealth to leave some new states, with full voting rights in the United Nations General Assembly, outside. The

¹³Brief VI: The Commonwealth as an Institution, 22 March, 1960. PAC RG 25 vol 3446 file 1-1960/3 part 2. Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers: London, May, 1960 - Briefs.

¹⁴Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁵Ibid. p. 3.

animosity they might hold for the Commonwealth could facilitate the spread of communist influence among developing countries, contrary to one of the purposes Canada saw for the Commonwealth. The question of membership, then, could not be separated from the purpose for which the Canadian government wished to use the Commonwealth.

Accommodating every possible member in the Commonwealth required an appropriate membership formula. This would have to reconcile anticipated trends in demand for membership with the Commonwealth's efficient operation as an instrument of Canadian foreign policy. The Canadian government saw four possible solutions to this. One would be to stop the growth of new members with Nigeria and possibly Cyprus. This would leave a Commonwealth which was demonstrably useful and which its members knew how to manage. Alternatively, new members could each be assessed on their individual merits: "the test would be the willingness and the ability of the candidate to assist the Commonwealth and its objectives."¹⁶ Finally, there was the idea circulating in the British government to have a multi-tiered Commonwealth. Each of these options risked antagonizing countries denied full membership. Each also presented individual difficulties: the first, the risk that a static Commonwealth might become stagnant; the second, the political difficulties of establishing standards; and the third, the dubious premise that candidates would accept a limited membership. The Canadian government, therefore, preferred "the simplest solution"¹⁷ - to continue admitting former dependencies following independence, on the recommendation of the former colonial administrator (so far, always Britain). This would avoid

¹⁶ Brief VI-D-1: Admission of New Members, 19 April, 1960. PAC RG 25 vol 3446 file 1-1960/3 part 2. p. 5.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 4.

creating hostile, rejected members, for there would be none, and preclude having to find a means to deal with 'orphans'. It would, officials hoped, keep newly independent countries oriented towards the West, stimulate the older members by giving them a fresh challenge and provide the Canadian government with a base on which to build contacts with the new states.

Canadian officials accepted that an enlarged Commonwealth might present problems, in areas such as cooperation, consultation and economic assistance. They could not even be certain that a larger, more heterogeneous, Commonwealth would hold together. If it did, its prestige and usefulness to current members might suffer. These problems did not seem insurmountable. The same fears had arisen before, but the Commonwealth had accommodated a doubling of its membership since 1945. The modalities of consultation might require adjustment, but "various groupings - what might be called 'circles' - already exist[ed] for the exchange of information and the cultivation of policies."¹⁸ Canada, for example, worked much more closely with Britain than with Australia and New Zealand or South Africa, and more closely with India than with Pakistan, Ceylon or Malaya. Canadian officials anticipated that with more members, this device would spontaneously adapt to the new situation.

The Canadian government saw no need for an immediate decision on membership structure. It preferred a review of the subject by nominees from each Commonwealth country, aiming at a set of general principles in time for the following CPMM.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Diefenbaker and his officials would

¹⁸ Brief VI: The Commonwealth as an Institution, 22 March, 1960. PAC RG 25 vol 3446 file 1-1960/3 part 2.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 9.

promote the 'simplest solution'. Concerning Cyprus, the cause of the current debate, the Canadian government, in keeping with its attitude towards membership, had no difficulties with the prospect of full membership. But just as Canada had no reason to exclude Cyprus from the Commonwealth, neither did it have any compelling national interest in pressing for Cypriot membership in the face of opposition. Notwithstanding a NATO aspect from having Greece and Turkey, mutually hostile, interested in the formula for Cypriot independence, the Canada's principle interest at stake was its Commonwealth interest.²⁰ Cyprus was the first small dependency to apply and others would inevitably follow. Were Cyprus to be rejected, the old members from the 'first' Commonwealth would surely be blamed, especially by dependencies which aspired to membership, and other states in the region which might ascribe the rejection to factors other than Cyprus' size. In either case, the Commonwealth's image would be adversely affected and thus its utility as a bridge to promote Western interests in the developing world.

Some Canadian ministers were reluctant to concede equal status to each and every dependency. They shared what they believed were British apprehensions about being swamped by a deluge of mini-members, turning the Commonwealth into a "glorified United Nations."²¹ Most, however, agreed with Diefenbaker and DEA officials that establishing classes within the Commonwealth would weaken its moral authority. Canada derived a measure of moral authority of its own from its Commonwealth activities and the relations with members of a 'glorified' United Nations were a good start for dealing with them at the real one. Thus, when Diefenbaker reported from London that

²⁰ Brief VI-C-1: Cyprus and the Commonwealth, 21 April, 1960. PAC RG 25 vol 3446 file 1-1960/3 part 2.

²¹ PAC RG 2 vol 2746. Cabinet Conclusions, 28 April, 1960.

the CPMM had decided against membership categories, Cabinet concurred. The CPMM, however, did not formally address Cypriot membership. While Makarios had rejected any possibility of accepting less than complete membership in January, 1960, Cyprus had not yet made a formal application.

The CPMM settled one aspect of the membership question, but others remained. The prime ministers realized that the general issue of membership required more consideration. Therefore, as the Canadian government had hoped, the meeting requested that a group of senior officials from Commonwealth countries study future Commonwealth development with special consideration to the situation of small territories. The group of officials, or Commonwealth Study Group (CSG) as it was known, consisted of six officials, headed by Sir Norman Brook. Canada's representative was Robert Bryce, the other members came from Australia, New Zealand, India and Ghana.

Once constituted, Canadian officials had to ensure the study did not go off in directions they had not intended. Officials at Canada House reported that the British government saw the CSG as creating shared responsibility, extricating the British government from the "lonely position of sole responsibility for determining timetables for independence and the nature of constitutional relationships to existing members and to each other of future potential members."²² The Canadian government was aghast at the prospect of sharing this 'lonely' role. Diefenbaker would only accept "joint participation of Commonwealth countries in decisions relating to full

²²Extract from Telegram 1593 from Canadian High Commission in Britain, 24 May, 1960 in Minute from Scott to Robertson, 26 May, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 207 file 12852-50. Commonwealth Study Group.

membership of the Commonwealth."²³ Beyond that, he was no more willing than Mackenzie King share responsibility. The Canadian government informed the British government that any reference to the committee considering timetables for independence or constitutional relationships was out of the question. These matters, so far as the Canadian government was concerned, were wholly within the domain of the administering power.²⁴ The Canadian government was not indifferent to the constitutional development of Commonwealth dependencies, but there could be no question of abandoning the link between the responsibility for a decision and the authority to enact it by allowing the Commonwealth to delve into a matter of policy to be exercised by a member state. The Canadian government no more wanted responsibility for any facet of British policy than it would accept interference in its own policies.

Flexibility, like policy independence, had been central to the Commonwealth's development since 1947. The Canadian view of the CSG sought to preserve both of these. At Bryce's request, DEA prepared an analysis of the type of Commonwealth that might result by projecting current membership conventions; it also contained observations and commentary on the parallel British papers being produced in connection with the study group. The British papers assumed the number of potential candidates for membership in the coming ten years would be limited because some small dependencies would attain independence within federations and others were either not suitable for, or desirous of, international status. By this reasoning, aside from

²³Memorandum for George Glazebrook, Commonwealth Division, from HB Robinson, DEA Liaison Officer, Prime Minister's Office. Assessment of Prime Ministers' Meeting in London Telegram 1593 of 24 May, 1960, 26 May, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 207 file 12852-40.

²⁴Telegram K-185 from Department of External Affairs to Canadian High Commission in Britain, 30 May, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 207 file 12852-40.

numbers, the Commonwealth's basic make-up would not dramatically change because new members would still be relatively large states. The Canadian paper, while extrapolating an increase of between ten and fourteen members over ten years, concluded that such projections were dangerous and should be avoided because "they are governed, unless most drastically inhibited, by immense margins of error."²⁵ Almost any total could be arrived at depending on the assumptions or attitudes of those making the projection. Canadian officials suspected that the analysis contained in the British papers was "conditioned by a reluctance in some sections of United Kingdom public opinion to accept the implications from several standpoints of Cypriot membership."²⁶ This, like the projection of the Commonwealth's future it conditioned, was subject to change. In the meantime, a Canadian objective with respect to the CSG would be to ensure that while the

Cyprus negotiations should be helped towards an internationally beneficial conclusion, the principles of Commonwealth membership should not be damaged in the process so as to prejudice, the future value of the Commonwealth for Canada and other members.²⁷

Future changes in the Commonwealth's membership, mostly from Africa, but also from the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, had the possibility of being important in relation to the international system as a whole. Accommodating them in the Commonwealth had importance beyond the traditional constitutional egalitarianism among Commonwealth members.

²⁵ Memorandum: A Projection of the Present Conventions Governing Commonwealth Membership. Prepared for Mr. Bryce by John Hadwin, Commonwealth Division, DEA, 25 June, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 90-1/008 vol 204 file 50085-1-40 part 1. Commonwealth Conferences - General (1952-1963).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

After studying various memoranda generated by the CSG process, Bryce concluded that Canada's traditional position was the most appropriate. In early July, 1960, before leaving for the CSG meeting in London, he set out his views in a memorandum for Diefenbaker. He rejected options limiting or otherwise restricting membership in favour of allowing all former dependencies to join. He acknowledged that this might yield a large total membership and require more formal CPMMs. Believing the Commonwealth's greatest importance was as a bridge between the West and the developing world, he felt it must provide a "friendly welcome, dignified status and a source of informal advice and assistance"²⁸ to new states. His only variation from both Diefenbaker and the balance of Canadian official opinion was over Cyprus. Bryce believed that Cyprus should be excluded from the Commonwealth unless Britain was deeply committed to its inclusion.²⁹ This had nothing to do with its size; he was unconvinced, given the strong pulls towards Greece and Turkey, that the new state would be able to pursue Commonwealth ties in a meaningful way. Since evaluating the admissability of particular candidates was not within the CSG's mandate, this was not critical. The general Canadian position remained consistent, both with respect to Cyprus and the line to take within the Study Group.

Rather than examining specific details of the Commonwealth relationship, the CSG approached it more theoretically. Before looking at the Commonwealth's future structure, it examined such basic issues as the nature of Commonwealth obligations. In the process, little new was said. The 1960

²⁸ Memorandum for the Prime Minister from Robert Bryce, Secretary to the Cabinet and Clerk of the Privy Council, 30 June, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 207 file 12852-40.

²⁹ Ibid.

study differed little from previous formulations of the question.³⁰ The obligations and marks of membership were not codified, but it summarized them as:

- (a) members will not normally intervene or comment on the domestic policies of others members;
- (b) members will consult or inform other members in advance of any action which may affect the interests of others;
- (c) independent members may attend meetings of prime ministers;
- (d) members may participate in Commonwealth educational schemes;
- (e) members may take part in economic consultation through the CECC and its subsidiary bodies;
- (f) members have special access to the London capital market, co-operate in the sterling area and have preferential access to Commonwealth markets arising from the Ottawa Agreements.³¹

Of these, only participation by right at CPMMs and the CECC were exclusive to independent members. The CSG identified intangible benefits from Commonwealth membership such as enhanced world standing, and benefits from the personal, professional and official contacts within the Commonwealth. For all the changes in the Commonwealth since 1947, a list of the basic benefits and obligations of membership prepared then would have differed little.

This was not the only area where the CSG went over well trodden ground. For example, the representative from Ghana, the newest member included in the group, advocated formalizing Commonwealth practices, including reserving the description 'Commonwealth' for independent countries of the Commonwealth.

³⁰ For example: Memorandum CDC(51)10: The Constitutional Development of Colonial Territories. Report of Joint Colonial Office/Commonwealth Relations Office Working Party, 29 March, 1951. PRO DO 35/2217 Constitutional Development in the Commonwealth: Constitutional Development of Colonial Territories - Their Relations with the Members of the Commonwealth. [file C2535/5]

³¹ Commonwealth Working Group. Membership of the Commonwealth, Annex: What Membership of the Commonwealth Implies, 7 July, 1960. PRO DO 35/7877 Commonwealth Study Group: Meaning of the Word Commonwealth, 1960. [file CON 32/40/32]

The distinction between dependencies and independent members had once been made via the term 'Dominion'. With its demise in the late 1940s, terminology became less evident, but the distinction remained. Independent states were Commonwealth members, but dependencies were considered within the Commonwealth for trade, citizenship and related matters. This satisfied other CSG members, none of whom was inclined to support this incipient formalization.

The Ghanaian proposal illustrated a growing trend. Newer members had a predilection towards formalizing Commonwealth relations. Prior to the 1960 CPMM, Nkrumah had objected to the traditional invitation to the Federation Rhodesia and Nyasaland's prime minister because it implied that not fully sovereign members could participate.³² Similarly, he had objected to the possible Nigerian representation in anticipation of its independence later in the year. More portentously, Nkrumah's position on Cyprus was that, although reluctant to include a country with treaty arrangements of the nature Cyprus would have with Greece and Turkey, he would not 'veto' it in the face of other members' support. At the same meeting, the prime minister of Malaya had also referred to a unanimity rule at CPMMs,³³ implying that voting or decision-making procedures existed in the Commonwealth. Existing practice regarding issues such as membership operated on a unanimity principle of sorts, but this took the form of consensus and quiet acquiescence on the part of members with doubts about a development, not a positive vote. Formalizing

³²See exchange of telegrams: Inward Telegram 472 to CRO from High Commissioner in Ghana, 19 October, 1959; and Outward CRO Telegram 710 to High Commissioner in Ghana, 22 October, 1959 in PRO DO 35/7949.

³³Minute from Brook to Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, Permanent Under-Secretary, CRO, 14 May, 1960. Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1960. Procedure at Prime Ministers' Meetings (The Unanimity Rule). [file CON 93/16(39)]

Commonwealth procedures would make the Commonwealth more like other international organizations and distance its activities from its imperial past, but would erode its characteristic informality and flexibility. In the past, Canada, South Africa, and India had resisted anything hinting at formalization because of fears that Britain would dominate the outcome or that sensitive national issues, such as race relations for South Africa and Kashmir for India, might be subject to a Commonwealth vote. Now, even Britain, previously resigned to the necessity of a strictly informal Commonwealth, made its preservation a priority.³⁴

The CSG wanted to preserve the Commonwealth's character not only in the face of expanding membership, including the admission of small members, but also with respect to procedure. Its recommendations in this respect focused on CPMMs on the assumption that other forms of information exchange and consultation would not experience any significant alteration to their character as a result in changes in membership, and because CPMMs were the Commonwealth's centre-piece.³⁵ The CSG considered several options but ultimately rejected limiting the privileges of smaller members. Using the same reasoning as the Canadian government, it concluded, that anything else would create two tiers, and "be a frustration of much of what the Commonwealth stands for".³⁶ Inclusivity had the benefit of enabling 'guidance' of new members by the old and avoided making the Commonwealth's membership requirements more restrictive than the United Nations. The CSG

³⁴ Commonwealth Study Group. The Commonwealth Unanimity Rule. Note for the United Kingdom Delegation [n.d. June, 1960]. PRO D0 35/7961.

³⁵ The Constitutional Development of the Commonwealth. Report by a Group of Commonwealth Officials, July 23, 1960. PRO CAB 21/3160. Commonwealth Study Group: General 1960. [file 10/4/83/1]

³⁶ Ibid. p. 11.

also rejected introducing greater formality and rules of procedure, although with larger numbers attending, CPMMs might need to be modified to maintain their informal character. To do this, the Study Group suggested that there be fewer plenary sessions, more plenary sessions without advisors, or more informal, 'free' time.

In coming together, the CSG dissipated the immediate pressures which gave rise to it. Its report was distributed to Commonwealth governments during the summer of 1960. The British Cabinet received the report in August, but held off making any judgement on it until other Commonwealth governments commented on it. Three months later none had.³⁷ Although the Canadian government had not found it necessary to communicate its acceptance, the report encapsulated its views on Commonwealth structure. However, if in recommending to allow the Commonwealth to develop as the flow of events took it, the Canadian view of substance and function overcame initial British preferences for procedure and institutional form, the Ghanaian position bespoke a growing challenge. Newer members wanted to change existing conventions to suit their needs. The Canadian government had insisted on maintaining existing informal practices so as to accommodate anticipated new members. This best served the functional objective of the Commonwealth supporting Canada's relations with developing countries. But for this to continue, this new pressure for change would have to be accommodated.

³⁷C. (60)159 Future Expansion of the Commonwealth. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 2 November, 1960. PRO CAB 129/102. Cabinet Memoranda 1960.

South African Membership: Round I - 1960

The growing pressure for procedural change from new members was felt in another controversial issue considered at the 1960 CPMM. Even more contentious than small state membership was the possibility of a request from South Africa to remain in the Commonwealth as a republic. While other members had already made similar changes, or in the case of Ceylon, had received confirmation that should they do so they would be able to continue their Commonwealth membership, the possibility of a South African request raised issues beyond the specific constitutional question. South Africa's policy of apartheid represented the antithesis of the modern multiracial Commonwealth. Still, the Commonwealth could only exist on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of its members and its corollary, the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other members. Resolving the contradiction between the two presented a dilemma for older members such as Canada and Britain and would test their responsiveness to the 'winds of change'.

South Africa's racist internal policies and the possibility of South Africa adopting a republican constitution had long hovered in the background of Commonwealth relations. The Indian government had first brought South Africa's treatment of people of Indian origin before the United Nations in 1946. The issue was never formally discussed in the Commonwealth but its presence was unmistakable. South Africa and India never exchanged high commissioners, nor, indeed, did South Africa exchange representatives with any other non-white member. Similarly, a change in South Africa's constitution was not surprising. At the 1949 meeting to find a means of accommodating India within the Commonwealth as a republic, South African

Prime Minister Dr. DF Malan had expressed the view that it was "natural that a gradual relaxation of the common allegiance should accompany the growing consciousness of separate nationhood in the Commonwealth."³⁸ That South Africa also proved extremely accommodating with respect to the second request of an Asian member to retain Commonwealth membership as a republic, that of Pakistan in 1955, prompted Pearson to speculate that South Africa too would soon become a republic.³⁹

The constitutional question remained a matter for conjecture pending an initiative from the South African government. The racial question, however, was unavoidable even with the Commonwealth convention of non-interference. The issue was before the United Nations, and before 1960, all Commonwealth members,⁴⁰ except Britain, had voiced their disapproval of South Africa's racial policies at the General Assembly.⁴¹ British governments did not condone the policy, but were reluctant to interfere in South Africa's internal affairs or publicly criticize a Commonwealth member.

As South Africa demonstrated, Commonwealth partnerships could be a mixed blessing. The Canadian government was aware that South Africa's membership

³⁸P.M.M. (49)1st meeting, Minutes of the first meeting, April 22, 1949. PRO CAB 133/89 Meeting of Prime Ministers, April 1949. Minutes of Meetings and Memoranda.

³⁹Lester Pearson Diary Extract, 4 February, 1955. PAC MG 26 N1 Lester B. Pearson Papers. Pre-1956 Series Correspondence, vol 23. Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference 1955 file.

⁴⁰The course of Canadian policy towards South Africa between 1945 and 1961 is detailed in: Frank Hayes, "South Africa's Departure from the Commonwealth, 1960-1961", International History Review. (2:3, July, 1980) pp. 453-84.

⁴¹Memorandum: South Africa's Application to Remain a Member of the Commonwealth, 4 February, 1961. PAC RG 25 ACC 85-6/551 vol 3447 file 1-1961/1 part 1. Briefs Prepared for the Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers (1961).

and members' reluctance to confront the issue constituted "a damaging talking-point for all detractors of the Commonwealth association, inside the Commonwealth and outside."⁴² The same was true of South Africa's alignment with the anti-communist West with respect to uncommitted countries in the Cold War. But South Africa was not the only Commonwealth partner with a less than pristine record of behaviour towards its own citizens. At one time, common institutions such as parliamentary democracy, free judiciaries and shared legal and political morality had been regarded as binding forces in the Commonwealth.⁴³ Like the link of common allegiance, this had gradually been eroded. Ghana violated Canadian ideas of judicial safeguards, but it offered an entrée for relations with emerging African states. Democracy in Pakistan had given way to military rule in 1958, but it remained steadfastly anti-communist. India's democracy was in some respects shaky and its human rights record imperfect, but the Canadian government saw preserving a moderately Western-orientation in India as the key to Asian stability in the Cold War. So too with South Africa, the Canadian government's position was that despite its opposition to South Africa's racial policies, there was no need to repudiate relations with the government. Indeed, maintaining contact could be used to seek improvement in the racial situation. The Canadian government was, nevertheless, aware of the balance of interests at play. As

⁴²Notes on South Africa and Its Relations with Canada, 2 March, 1959. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/360 vol 2 file 7060-40 part 6.

⁴³For example: Memorandum: Considerations on the Nature of the Commonwealth, 6 October, 1948. PAC RG 25 vol 2285 file S/29/3; Memorandum: Future Membership of the Commonwealth, December, 1955. PRO DO 35/5060 file CON 32/40/14 Commonwealth Membership. Diefenbaker remained fond of references to this kind of link in public speeches, for example: John G. Diefenbaker, "Canada and the Commonwealth". Excerpts from a Speech to the Commonwealth and Empire Industries Association, November 4, 1958. Statements and Speeches 58/44.; and John G. Diefenbaker, "A New Concept of Commonwealth". Speech at a State Banquet at Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, 28 November, 1958. Statements and Speeches 59/13. (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1959).

had been evident in discussions over the possibility that South Africa would create obstacles to the membership of Ghana in 1957, given the choice between South African membership and a broadly based Commonwealth, the Canadian government would probably choose the latter. Prior to 1960, however, there had been no need to consider the choice.

The situation in South Africa also had a domestic aspect for the Canadian government. Over the years, DEA had received numerous letters from concerned members of the public questioning Canadian policy at the United Nations and urging stronger measures there. The issue was not at the top of the public's agenda, but the numbers were increasing. At the end of January, 1960, it received a highly public boost. The Canadian Labour Congress submitted a brief to Diefenbaker urging the Canadian government to unequivocally condemn South African policies at the United Nations and elsewhere. Among its recommendations, the brief supported the idea that South Africa be excluded from the Commonwealth.

In responding, Diefenbaker summarized the government's attitude towards South Africa. Speaking extemporaneously, he told the Congress that

the various members of the Commonwealth are bound to disagree with the manner in which other nations within the Commonwealth conduct certain courses of action, but the essence of the Commonwealth is the independence of each nation.⁴⁴

He stressed that he and the Canadian government disagreed strongly with the South African policies, but said that he would not raise the subject at the upcoming CPMM in May, 1960. Diefenbaker maintained this position, further

⁴⁴Diefenbaker's remarks contained in: Outgoing Message K-37 from DEA to Canadian High Commission in South Africa, 2 February, 1960. PAC RG 26 ACC 86-7/360 vol 2 file 7060-40 part 7.

refining it in public with the distinction between not initiating discussion of South Africa with his fellow prime ministers and being willing to discuss it if it did arise. The deaths of sixty-seven blacks and the injury of one hundred and sixty seven more through police action in South Africa at Sharpville and Langa in late March, 1961, focused world and Commonwealth attention on South Africa. This absolved Diefenbaker of the need to raise the issue in May - it would come up. On the other hand, it put more pressure on the Canadian government to publicly condemn South African policy.

True to the long-standing Canadian policy of not isolating the South African government, the Canadian government did not make any formal query or complaint to the South African government about the events at Sharpville and Lange. In the House of Commons, Diefenbaker responded to calls that it do so by re-iterating the traditional themes of distaste for the policy but preference for constructive engagement:

the government must have one over-riding criterion in mind. The important consideration is not whether any action or statement by Canada would relieve Canadian feelings, but what practical effect such action might have in South Africa itself. In other words, we have a responsibility, and a solemn one, to reconcile the natural desire in the circumstances to demonstrate by positive action Canadian feelings of distress and, on the other hand, the necessity of ensuring that any such statement or action would help, and not hinder, those people who so strongly merit sympathy and concern.⁴⁵

As universal outrage over the situation in South Africa mounted, conflicting elements of Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth grew harder to reconcile. On the one hand, there was the principle of non-interference and, in keeping with the Commonwealth's tradition of flexible accommodation of diversity, the hope of finding some means of keeping South Africa within the

⁴⁵ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (3rd Session, 24th Parliament, Vol III, 25 March, 1960) p. 2448.

Commonwealth. On the other hand, there was the need to preserve the Commonwealth as a bridge. Diefenbaker's advisors had different opinions as to which should be stressed more. Officials at DEA, emphasizing the former, advocated tempering criticism of South Africa in the hope of maintaining a constructive relationship with the government there. On the other side of the debate Bryce thought that Canada should take a leading role actively criticizing South Africa.⁴⁶ Bryce, the secretary to the cabinet, was to accompany Diefenbaker to the CPMM as the senior official advisor, but in a debate in the House of Commons on apartheid and Commonwealth relations just before Diefenbaker left for London, the DEA position, supported by the opposition Liberals under Pearson, showed itself to be the dominant approach in Canadian policy.⁴⁷

The potential for a serious split or even rupture within the Commonwealth was becoming obvious. For example, before leaving for the CPMM, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaya's prime minister, with the unanimous support of the Malayan Parliament, had said that he would raise the issue of South Africa's racial policies regardless of whether it precipitated that country's withdrawal from the Commonwealth.⁴⁸ Canada and Britain preferred a solution which would enable South Africa to remain within the Commonwealth, but that would require a compromise of titanic, but not inconceivable, proportions. As opposed to apartheid as other members were, none wanted the Commonwealth

⁴⁶The debate between Bryce and officials at DEA can be seen in RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 file 11827-40. 'Future Relationship Between South Africa and the Commonwealth', and is examined in some detail in both Hayes, "South Africa's Departure from the Commonwealth", International History Review. pp. 464, 471-9 and Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. pp. 123-8, 178-80.

⁴⁷Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (3rd Session, 24th Parliament, vol III, 27 April, 1960) pp. 3319-41.

⁴⁸Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (3rd Session, 24th Parliament, vol III, 27 April, 1960) p. 3323.

to become a forum to judge members' behaviour and policies or differences between members.

The Commonwealth relationship required that members overlook their many, and growing, differences. Each of the factors which made Commonwealth members less than pure provided a reason for them to exercise restraint in setting precedents for Commonwealth intrusions into domestic behaviour. Once set, there could be no predicting what havoc it would wreak on Commonwealth relationships. Canada would not be immune from the fallout, as Diefenbaker warned his cabinet colleagues on his return from London:

If Commonwealth Conferences should once adopt the majority vote as a means of reaching its decisions, the non-white majority at the next conference would probably support free migration of peoples. Such an immigration policy was clearly unacceptable to the Canadian people.⁴⁹

The wider implications of a debate for the Commonwealth did not prevent the subject from arising. At the opening session on 3 May, 1960, the Malayan prime minister argued that apartheid and the events in South Africa went beyond the limits of domestic concern and required Commonwealth action "to preserve its standards of conduct and its moral principles of equality of men irrespective of colour, and of justice and fair play."⁵⁰

⁴⁹PAC RG 2 vol 2746. Cabinet Conclusions, 16 May, 1960. Ironically, despite Diefenbaker's concerns over non-white immigration, Canadian immigration regulations were undergoing a gradual evolution under the ministry of Helen Fairclough (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration from May, 1958 to August, 1962) which liberalized implementation of Canada's immigration laws and started to remove racial discrimination from Canada's immigration policy. This was accomplished without legislative changes and so without the level of public debate which might have otherwise occurred. It was, nevertheless, undertaken during a period of fluctuating, but generally low, immigration levels due in large measure to high unemployment in Canada. See: David Corbett, "Canada's Immigration Policy, 1957-1962", International Journal. (XVII:2, Spring, 1963) pp. 166-80.

⁵⁰Diefenbaker, Once Canada. The Years of Achievement. p. 210.

The issue of South Africa, once raised, placed Macmillan, as meeting chairman, in a difficult situation. His solution, in keeping with the practice not to discuss internal affairs at the meetings, was to have interested parties discuss the subject informally away from the main meetings.⁵¹ Diefenbaker, in keeping with his stated willingness to discuss the issue, even if he did not want to take the lead on it, had several private talks with South Africa's representative, Foreign Minister Eric Louw. In these, the Canadian prime minister sought not a repudiation of South Africa's policies, but only some indication that the South African government was prepared to make a gesture to world opinion. Diefenbaker's proposal that three out of one hundred and fifty six seats in the South African Parliament be allocated to representatives of the black majority did not jeopardize white rule in the country and only tried to re-establish an arrangement abolished 1948.⁵²

Diefenbaker, although on record as opposing the discrimination of apartheid, was not a hostile critic. Indeed, he came away from the talks feeling South African's "case was plausible."⁵³ He reported to Cabinet that

[Louw] pointed out, and competent English observers agreed, that South Africa had raised the living standard of its native population higher than any other state in Africa. He had contended that the apartheid policy represented the only possible salvation of South Africa... Self-government could not be imposed from above on an untrained body of citizens, but already the black population was beginning to practice self-government in rural areas where no white man could hold office. The registration books should not be regarded as instruments of oppression, but were designed to prevent the entry of hordes of natives across an undefended frontier to take all available employment. Mr. Louw said that within his

⁵¹C.C.(60)29(2), Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 6 May, 1960.
PRO CAB 128/34. Cabinet Conclusions.

⁵²PAC RG 2 vol 2746, Cabinet Conclusions, 14 May, 1960.

⁵³PAC RG 2 vol 2746. Cabinet Conclusions, 16 May, 1960.

country neither the black or the white people were generally opposed to the government. The principal criticism of his government was coming from two communist-led organizations...[and the] Anglican Church...⁵⁴

Even with such an accommodating interlocutor as Diefenbaker, the exchange of ideas was one way, and Louw remained unyielding. Indeed, having found flexibility in the other prime ministers, he pushed on to raise the subject of South Africa's continued membership as a republic despite the British government's preference to try to avoid the subject by convincing him not to raise it.⁵⁵

Ordinarily, a request for continuing membership as a republic was a formality. There was no question about South Africa's continuing membership as a monarchy, even India's Nehru, hardly a friend of the South African government, had taken a strong stand against any condemnation of South Africa which might have lead either to expulsion or withdrawal.⁵⁶ But on the question of its continued membership as a republic, the Commonwealth prime ministers refused to anticipate the results of a South African referendum on the subject. The Canadian delegation's brief on the subject of South Africa's status had noted that politicians from the governing Nationalist Party had been making "pro-Commonwealth" noises, possibly because they felt that saying that they intended to withdraw from the Commonwealth would cause them to lose the referendum.⁵⁷ Following this line of reasoning, Diefenbaker recommended that an anticipatory agreement would constitute

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ C.C. (60)29(2), Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 6 May, 1960. PRO CAB 128/34. Cabinet Conclusions.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Brief VI-D-2: Possible Status for South Africa, 22 April, 1960. PAC RG 25 vol 3446 file 1-1960/3 part 2.

interference in South Africa's internal affairs because it might influence the outcome of the referendum. The prime ministers, therefore, postponed deciding on South Africa's future membership until after South Africa had itself decided.⁵⁸ The final communiqué reaffirmed "the traditional practice that Commonwealth conferences do not discuss the internal affairs of member countries,"⁵⁹ and "emphasised that the Commonwealth itself [was] a multiracial association."⁶⁰ It did not, however, say whether this made South Africa ineligible for continued membership without at least some small effort to modify apartheid.

The Winds Undiverted: African Assistance

The Commonwealth's changing composition focused more of its attention on issues of interest to developing members. Starting with Pakistan's memorandum at the 1949 finance ministers' meeting, this had invariably meant development assistance. The prospect of more African members naturally turned attention to their aid requirements. Before the 1960 CPMM, the CRO had reviewed the merits of a 'Colombo Plan' for Africa. The motives were essentially political.⁶¹ It would meet domestic criticism that the government was not helping newly independent African countries sufficiently; draw other Commonwealth members, especially Canada, to contribute more to African aid; and demonstrate the Commonwealth's value to African members. As

⁵⁸"Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 1960 (London, 3-13 May). Final Communiqué", The Commonwealth at the Summit. p. 63.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Minute from Lintott to Rumbold, Deputy Under-Secretary of State, CRO, 5 April, 1960. PRO DO 35/8679. Commonwealth Plan for Africa. [file EC 182/247/1]

the 1960 CPMM approached, another advantage emerged. Since it was obvious the issue of South Africa would bedevil the meeting, African aid would be a good diversionary tactic.⁶² Home told Macmillan:

it is largely a facade... My main reason for putting the idea forward now is that at a time when our Commonwealth relations are overshadowed by the South African situation, it would be valuable to launch what will be seen as a constructive and positive action in relation to Africa in a non-political field.⁶³

Home conceded here were drawbacks to the idea and as other ministers reviewed it these came to the fore: broad participation was uncertain, especially by Australia and New Zealand; there would be pressure to include non-Commonwealth participants, opening the possibility of communist participation⁶⁴ and, the perennial bugbear, it would create demands for more money from Britain.⁶⁵ Cost considerations weighed against a structure requiring firm commitments, but those of politics required action. Finding a balance was the key to success.

Before the British government could develop a suitable proposal, events passed it by. In discussions at the CPMM on the world economic situation, Nkrumah suggested Commonwealth countries take the lead in creating a Colombo-type plan for Africa.⁶⁶ Australia's Menzies and New Zealand's Nash

⁶² Lintott to Clutterbuck, 21 April, 1960. PRO DO 35/8378.

⁶³ Serial 29/60 from Home to Macmillan, 3 May, 1960. PRO DO 35/8378.

⁶⁴ PM(60)25 Commonwealth Economic Plan for Africa. Iain Macleod, Colonial Secretary, to Macmillan, 4 May, 1960. PRO DO 35/8378.

⁶⁵ Heathcoat Amory, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to Macmillan, 4 May, 1960; and PM/60/47 Selwyn Lloyd, Secretary of State for Foreign Relations, to Macmillan, 5 May, 1960. PRO DO 35/8378.

⁶⁶ Outward CRO Telegram 214 to United Kingdom High Commission in Ghana, 5 May, 1960. PRO DO 35/7956. Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1960. Distribution of Minutes, reports to High Commissions, etc. [file CON 93/16(18)]

supported the idea. So too did Diefenbaker, citing the situation in South Africa as reason to act expeditiously.⁶⁷ Not having anticipated the issue, Diefenbaker spoke without prior cabinet consultation and so hedged his support by stressing the need for further study.⁶⁸ His colleagues in Ottawa, recognizing the sensitivity of the situation, decided that although "Nkrumah had obviously exploited the situation created by events in South Africa...the government should certainly support the proposal."⁶⁹ Despite agreement from Diefenbaker and others on the need for more African aid, none of the leaders committed themselves to providing it.

Nkrumah's initiative took British officials aback. Given the objections raised by their own review of the subject, CRO officials were alarmed at the prospect of even studying such a plan.⁷⁰ Elsewhere, Brook worried that a study would inevitably lead to creating a new organization, "with all the wrangles which this would involve as to membership etc."⁷¹ His preference was to mention the issue no further at the meeting except among officials drafting the communiqué. There he would try to keep details "sufficiently fluffy to avoid committing [Britain] to a new organisation without further thought."⁷² Nevertheless, the final communiqué, while only committing Commonwealth governments to considering the possibility of co-operative action on African aid, set a definite timeframe for this consideration. The

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ PAC RG 2 vol 2746. Cabinet Conclusions, 5 May, 1960.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Minute from Rumbold to NE Costar, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, CRO, 9 May, 1960. PRO DO 35/7960.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

matter would be first studied by officials and then examined by the CECC at its next meeting.

The situation older Commonwealth members such as Canada faced was similar to those they had faced over proposals for a Commonwealth development bank. No Commonwealth country was able to provide substantial amounts of capital. As was the case with a bank, this posed the danger that a scheme which produced no new resources would create resentment among recipients. The Canadian government was better placed to devote new resources to African aid than Britain, the largest Commonwealth donor country, but alone could not endow a capital assistance fund. Canadian proposals for the CECC, seeking to avoid a new Commonwealth institution, mixed bilateral programmes with increased funding to international organizations. The hope was that in taking the initiative to address what was undeniably a great need, the Canadian government would be in a strong position to influence the form and magnitude of anything that might emerge from the Commonwealth talks.⁷³ The discussions at the CPMM had created high expectations in Africa. The Canadian objective was to meet these in a manner which would strengthen the Commonwealth tie but at a reasonable cost. Accordingly, the Canadian government decided to offer C\$3 million for the first year of a three year programme, with the contribution growing by C\$0.5 million in each of the following two years. Parallel Canadian contributions totalling C\$4 million would go to the United Nations Special Fund and the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. Having committed these funds, Canada would stand firmly against any new institutions, proposing instead that the CECC review African assistance programmes at subsequent meetings.

⁷³PAC RG 2 vol 2747. Cabinet Conclusions, 13 September, 1960.

The result of the September CECC meeting was as the Canadian government had hoped. Other donors, such as Britain, shared the Canadian view. Rather than creating a new organization, the finance ministers agreed to establish SCAAP, the Special Commonwealth African Aid Plan to fulfill the CPMM's undertakings. Every Commonwealth member, including South Africa, committed itself to provide assistance to African members. However, each would decide, according to the limits of its resources, on the level and allocation of this assistance.⁷⁴ Like the Colombo Plan, donor countries would make their own arrangements bilaterally with recipients. Unlike the Colombo Plan, there would be no joint institution to facilitate cooperation and monitor programmes under the plan. Instead, as the Canadian government had wished, the CECC would review SCAAP annually.

The creation of SCAAP showed how the countries of the 'old' Commonwealth could be responsive to the 'winds of change.' In fact, it showed them managing them fairly well. While SCAAP resulted from Nkrumah's initiative, it showed the older members in control. However, if anyone had ever seriously entertained the notion that progress on African assistance would divert attention from the issue of South Africa, they were to be sorely disappointed.

South African Membership: Round II - 1961

In the aftermath of the 1960 CPMM, the course of Canadian policy on South Africa was far from decided. Diefenbaker, returning as he did convinced of South Africa's 'plausible case' and, as he told the House of

⁷⁴Memorandum: Special Commonwealth African Aid Programme, 16 February, 1961. PAC RG 25 ACC 85-6/551 vol 3447 file 1-1961/1 part 1. Briefs Prepared for the Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers (1961).

Commons, believing "more certainly" in the need to preserve the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of members,⁷⁵ seemed predisposed to finding a compromise. He was not, however, prepared to give the South African government a free ride. When Verwoerd told the South African Parliament on 2 July, 1960, of his confidence that the combined influence of Britain, Australia and Canada within the Commonwealth would ensure that South African membership would continue, Diefenbaker assured his cabinet colleagues⁷⁶ and the country, via the House of Commons,⁷⁷ that he had not said anything at the CPMM which could be so construed. This, he told Cabinet, was obviously an attempt to influence the outcome of the yet-to-be announced South African referendum.

The victory of the republican side in the South African referendum on 5 October made a final resolution of the South Africa question unavoidable. Soon after the vote, planning got underway for another CPMM to be held in March, 1961. Alongside this planning was a vigorous effort on the part of the British government to ensure that South Africa's application for continued membership would be approved.⁷⁸ The British position was that in the past re-admission for members adopting republican constitutions had been automatic and that the South African request for continued membership should be treated solely on its constitutional merits as had the others. But

⁷⁵John G. Diefenbaker, "The Expanding Commonwealth. Speech to the House of Commons on 16 May, 1960", Statements and Speeches 60/19. (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1960) p. 2.

⁷⁶PAC RG 2 vol 2747. Cabinet Conclusions, 5 July, 1960.

⁷⁷Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (3rd Session, 24th Parliament, vol V, 5 July, 1960) p. 5725.

⁷⁸PAC RG 2 vol 2747. Cabinet Conclusions, 10 November, 1960.

regardless of the precedents, by now it was inconceivable that the issues of apartheid and South Africa's continued membership would be disentangled.

Canada now needed a definite policy, but at the official level, DEA and Bryce, fresh from the CSG exercise, were still proffering divergent opinions. The Canadian government was still unwilling to take the lead in pushing South Africa out of the Commonwealth. When Cabinet reconsidered the issue in February before the March CPMM, there was no support for doing so and much apprehension that the government would suffer public recrimination in Canada were it to take the lead.⁷⁹ Green, the SSEA, was one of those most against Canada taking a leading role in expelling South Africa. His department continued to seek a compromise enabling South Africa to stay, or at least ensuring that if South Africa went, it left on its own initiative as might happen if the prime ministers endorsed a strong declaration in support of racial equality.

The arguments for supporting South Africa's expulsion were also potent, if less widely held. Rather than weakening the Commonwealth by dividing it and introducing an intrusive aspect, expelling South Africa could strengthen it as a multiracial organization. The previous September, when considering the Canadian position at the United Nations, public expectations of Canadian behaviour in the wake of Diefenbaker's personal initiative in creating a Bill of Rights for Canada had weighed heavily in favour of Canada voting for a resolution condemning South Africa as had the implications for Canada's

⁷⁹PAC RG 2 vol 6176. Cabinet Conclusions, 11 February and 25 February, 1961.

relations with developing countries.⁸⁰ The same arguments were still valid. This was very much a minority view in Cabinet where the "the great majority - in fact almost all"⁸¹ - were opposed to it. However, even if the Canadian government was not actively seeking South Africa's expulsion, Diefenbaker was not prepared to grant automatic readmission. He was willing to have South Africa as a Commonwealth member. He said as much in his correspondence with Verwoerd, much to the South African prime minister's confusion and irritation when he compared Diefenbaker's public statement's with his private letters.⁸² What Diefenbaker needed was a reason, any reason, to allow South Africa to stay.

The gesture towards reform which Diefenbaker had urged at his meetings with Louw in 1960 had still not come. A brief prepared by DEA in the lead-up to the March CPMM discerned some encouraging signs in South African society.⁸³ It cited growing sentiment against apartheid among South African churches, including two strong wings of the Dutch Reform Church, the church of the dominant white Afrikaners. As well, the still white supremacist opposition United Party and the smaller Progressive Party had indicated a willingness to offer concessions such as extending the franchise to all on the basis of income and education. These examples, however, were isolated

⁸⁰PAC RG 2 vol 2747. Cabinet Conclusions, 16 September, 1960.

⁸¹Interview with Alvin Hamilton [ex-minister of agriculture] in: Peter Stursberg, Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained 1956-62. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1975) p. 163.

⁸²Note for the Record. Meeting between Prime Minister and Dr. Verwoerd, 7 March, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3535. Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 1961: Discussions on Continued Membership of South Africa in Commonwealth.

⁸³Memorandum: South Africa's Application to Remain a Member of the Commonwealth, 4 February, 1961. PAC RG 25 ACC 85-6/551 vol 3447 file 1-1961/1 part 1. Briefs Prepared for the Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers (1961).

instances with long term hope rather than signs of a fundamental realignment of South African politics. From the South African government there was nothing.

South Africa's government was aware of the potential difficulties it faced in continuing the country's Commonwealth membership. Since it was unwilling to modify its internal policies, it sought some other means to turn the tide of events. In this it had a diligent ally in the British government. Verwoerd and Macmillan, consulted frequently in the lead-up to the March meeting and met privately just before it. Macmillan's determination to keep South Africa in the Commonwealth was obvious and like those who saw membership of an apartheid government as incompatible with their vision of the Commonwealth, this determination was based on a specific conception of the Commonwealth. In his talks with Verwoerd, Macmillan touched on this and "argued that it was now a sphere of influence and was not an organisation based on a principle."⁸⁴ The forthcoming CPMM, then, would be a proving ground for different ideas of the Commonwealth.

The British government considered various tactics to thwart efforts to expel South Africa at the meeting. One was to reverse the unanimity rule opponents of South Africa implied and insist on a unanimous expression of intent to expel South Africa.⁸⁵ Another was to suggest excluding the South African government from Commonwealth consultation until it abandoned apartheid, but allow membership to continue otherwise. There was a risk that the South African government might then leave, but at least it would be on

⁸⁴ Note for the Record. Meeting between Prime Minister and Dr. Verwoerd, 7 March, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3535.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

its own initiative.⁸⁶ Macmillan preferred, however, to keep the subject of apartheid out of the discussion altogether. Since he did not see this as practicable, his plan was to try to keep the subjects of apartheid and continued membership separate. The biggest danger to this plan, he thought, came not from a leader from the developing world, but from Diefenbaker.⁸⁷ Should Diefenbaker insist on discussing racial policies with the constitutional item, all Macmillan could do was try to have that meeting in private, attended only by prime ministers, with no officials present and thus no record kept. This assessment of Diefenbaker was, perhaps, more a reflection of his unpredictability than anything else. Despite many public statements beforehand opposing racial discrimination, including a speech in Belfast on 4 March, 1961, in which he went slightly further and pondered the effect of discrimination on the Commonwealth,⁸⁸ Diefenbaker had refused to commit himself. Little did anyone suspect that once he got to London, Diefenbaker would favour more delay and reconsideration of the issue latter.

The much anticipated meeting began 8 March, 1961. The first days were occupied with the usual array of international issues. Discussion on South Africa did not begin until 13 March. Before then, searching for delay, Diefenbaker and Bryce (who still personally advocated actively expelling South Africa) discussed the possibility of suggesting that at the next Commonwealth meeting, a Commonwealth declaration of principles should be considered.⁸⁹ The idea of a declaration of some sort had been circulating

⁸⁶ Minute from Brook to Macmillan, 6 March, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3535.

⁸⁷ Note for the Record. Meeting between Prime Minister and Dr. Verwoerd, 7 March, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3535.

⁸⁸ "Commonly Accepted Standards", Globe and Mail. (7 March, 1961).

⁸⁹ Teletype 11 from Bryce to SSEA and USSEA, 10 March, 1961. PAC MG 30 E163 vol 18. Norman Robertson Papers. Personal Correspondence, 1961 (file 2).

in Ottawa since January, and Diefenbaker had mentioned it before leaving Canada in an address to the prestigious Canadian Club in Toronto and again at the airport on his arrival in London. It was the type of thing which appealed to Diefenbaker. He had championed the Canadian Bill of Rights and two years previously had called for a declaration of 'freedom's creed' by Western powers to clearly establish the moral basis of the Cold War.⁹⁰

Bryce reported back to Ottawa that Diefenbaker was

presently considering the manner in which this might be related to the South Africa issue and the possibility of having the conference this year make some mention of such a declaration in connection with its decision on [the] South African issue.⁹¹

This solution maintained the link between the issues of membership and racial policy, but temporally separating them by dealing with the one immediately while putting off the more contentious issue until later. Delay, however, proved impossible.

On 13 March, Verwoerd opened the meeting with a formal statement of South Africa's intent to become a republic on 31 May, 1961. By prior arrangement, Nehru spoke immediately afterwards and Diefenbaker followed. The Canadian prime minister began in a conciliatory manner, talking of South Africa's valuable contributions to the Commonwealth. He then denounced apartheid and warned that South Africa's association with the Commonwealth would damage its credibility and value to other members. Finally, he suggested that since South Africa was not yet a republic, it would be

⁹⁰John G. Diefenbaker, "The Need for a Declaration of Freedom's Creed. Speech to the Convocation of the University of Toronto, 12 January, 1959", Statements and Speeches 59/5. (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1959).

⁹¹Teletype 11 from Bryce to SSEA and USSEA, 10 March, 1961. PAC MG 30 E163 vol 18. Norman Robertson Papers. Personal Correspondence, 1961 (file 2).

premature to act.⁹² In the meantime, he urged members to consider his idea of drafting a declaration of Commonwealth principles for the next CPMM. In the addresses of the other prime ministers which followed, a divide between the 'old' Commonwealth and the 'new' was unmistakable. Diefenbaker alone among the prime ministers of the 'old' Commonwealth accepted the link between the constitutional question and the apartheid question.

In the afternoon, Verwoerd gave a lengthy defence of apartheid. In answering the questions which followed, he showed no willingness to compromise, especially with respect to Diefenbaker's renewed request for modifications to parliamentary representation. After a short recess, Macmillan suggested a formula whereby Commonwealth leaders would consent to South African membership and issue a declaration condemning apartheid. The reaction was generally unfavourable on the grounds that the two elements were incompatible.⁹³ At day's end, the issue was unresolved, but Diefenbaker's preferred route was definitely blocked. He would have to make a definitive choice, and with Verwoerd's refusal to compromise, Diefenbaker had more in common with the leaders of the 'new' Commonwealth than the 'old'.

Macmillan too saw which way the wind was blowing. Following the meetings of 13 March, he urged Verwoerd to make a gesture towards internal reform and undertake to exchange high commissioners with every member of the Commonwealth. Verwoerd flatly refused. He cited members' acceptance at the 1960 CPMM of Ghana's decision to become a republic without any conditions for that country to return to democracy in order remain a "member of a

⁹² Teletype 19 from the Prime Minister's Delegation in London to the SSEA and USSEA in Ottawa, 13 March, 1961. PAC MG 30 E163 vol 18. Norman Robertson Papers. Personal Correspondence, 1961 (file 2).

⁹³ Ibid.

Commonwealth which is based on democratic principles."⁹⁴ Moreover, Malaya had never been asked to discard the discriminatory clauses in its constitution. As for exchanging high commissioners, Verwoerd saw no need to exchange them with members such as New Zealand or the soon to be admitted Sierra Leone because the level of relations did not demand it and other members such as India, Nigeria and Ghana were hostile to South Africa. What he might be able to accept, however, was a solution whereby members would accept South African membership and make a separate statement denouncing racial discrimination. The talks on 14 March were devoted to various drafts of a possible communiqué embodying these elements put forward by Macmillan. Discussion ranged back and forth as to whether the condemnation of South Africa was too strong, not strong enough, too much interference in the country's internal affairs, or a necessary statement of principle. Diefenbaker was now definitely in the anti-South Africa camp, but demanding the statement as a means to keep South Africa in, not forcing it out. He was not seeking a statement Verwoerd could not accept, but without a change in apartheid, this was the minimum Diefenbaker could accept. At the end of the sessions on 14 March, the situation Verwoerd faced was that South African membership could continue if he accepted a final communiqué with a statement condemning apartheid in severe terms and "stating that the principle of non-discrimination in respect of race and colour [was] basic to the multi racial Commonwealth."⁹⁵ South Africa would not be asked to subscribe to the declaration, a concession of sorts, but the government would then be faced with the dilemma as to whether it really wished to be a member of a

⁹⁴ Dr. H.F.Verwoerd, Prime Minister of South Africa, to Macmillan, 14 March, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3535.

⁹⁵ Teletype 23 from Prime Minister's Delegation in London to SSEA and USSEA Ottawa, 14 March, 1961. PAC MG 30 E163 vol 18. Norman Robertson Papers. Personal Correspondence 1961 (file 2).

Commonwealth where all the other members had made a declaration of this sort. Verwoerd had the night to consider his position, but it was now "up to South Africa to decide whether or not to remain as a member under these conditions."⁹⁶

When the prime ministers reconvened the next day a compromise appeared possible.⁹⁷ Verwoerd agreed to the formula combining acceptance of South African membership with a statement condemning apartheid and establishing non-discrimination as a fundamental Commonwealth principle.⁹⁸ The only hitch was Verwoerd's demand for the opportunity to state South Africa's argument in more detail. Diefenbaker and Nehru protested that this would give the South African perspective too much prominence. There followed escalating attacks from leaders representing the 'new' Commonwealth, including indications from some, such as Nkrumah, that they might have to reconsider their country's membership if South Africa remained a member. After a recess called by Macmillan to let things cool off, Verwoerd announced that he was withdrawing South Africa's request for continued membership.

The dire hints that South African membership might be incompatible with membership of some other members from the developing world only drew more attention to a factor of which Diefenbaker and the other Commonwealth leaders were already well aware. The issue of South Africa would set the tone of the future Commonwealth. On the Sunday before the discussions on South Africa

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ More detailed accounts of this meeting are contained in Hayes, "South Africa's Departure from the Commonwealth", International History Review. pp. 473-6 and Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. pp. 185-6.

⁹⁸ Teletype 23 from Prime Minister's Delegation in London to the SSEA and USSEA in Ottawa, 15 March, 1961. PAC MG 30 E163 vol 18. Norman Robertson Papers. Personal Correspondence 1961 (file 2).

began, an article by Julius Nyerere, the chief minister of Tanganyika, appeared in a national newspaper in Britain. In it, he warned that without some change in South Africa, Tanganyika could not join the Commonwealth after independence.⁹⁹ On his return to Canada, Diefenbaker cited this article and other similar statements as an important factor in shaping an outcome which "foreshadowed the course and promise of the future".¹⁰⁰ It was, nevertheless, a future course with its own momentum. Diefenbaker had not shaped it, he had only recognized its direction.

Diefenbaker's role, especially at the final meeting is easy to overstate.¹⁰¹ He had not led the pressure on South Africa. His importance lay with the fact that he was the only member of the 'old' Commonwealth to side with the African and Asian members and so, like St. Laurent and Pearson over Suez, prevented a clear division by race. Diefenbaker, most of his Cabinet, and most of his officials were naturally inclined towards a solution which would have kept South Africa within the Commonwealth. But when the choice came, as it eventually did, between maintaining the Commonwealth as an effective bridge to the developing world and possibly sacrificing that

⁹⁹ Julius Nyerere, "Commonwealth Choice: South Africa or Us", The Observer. (12 March, 1961)

¹⁰⁰ John G. Diefenbaker, "A Major Test for the Commonwealth. Statement in the House of Commons, 17 March, 1961", Statements and Speeches 61/3. (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1961) p. 7.

Basil Robinson mentions a direct plea prior to the meetings from Nyerere to Diefenbaker with a similar warning. See: Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. p. 180.

¹⁰¹ As do Diefenbaker in One Canada: The Years of Achievement. pp. 208-21 and Menzies in his account of the meetings contained in Robert Menzies, Afternoon Light: Some Memoirs of Men and Events. (London: Cassell, 1967) pp. 194-212. Nehru's biographer ascribes the Canadian prime minister a supporting rather than leading role which Robinson concurs. See Sarvepalli Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography. Volume Three: 1956-1964. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984) p. 159; and Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. p. 186.

bridge, the former could be the only route. Diefenbaker was fortunate in that his calculation as to Canada's balance of interest with respect to South African membership was relatively easy and straight forward. Notwithstanding trade and other links with South Africa, Canada's overriding concern was for the Commonwealth. There, Canada's principal interest was its maintenance as an effective vehicle for dialogue with developing states. South African membership jeopardized this. If the issue had to be resolved immediately, there was little difficulty in calculating how Canada's interests were best served. Had he faced a situation such as that which confronted Macmillan, Diefenbaker, always with an eye to the domestic political implications of any action, would have had a much more difficult decision.

Settling Down with the Third Commonwealth

South Africa's voluntary withdrawal represented a victory for the 'new' Commonwealth. It marked the first time that a decision was taken at a CPMM in the face of concerted opposition from Britain. Previously, British prime ministers had not always achieved their aims, but they had not had to accept such a reversal. The new Commonwealth relationship was shaping up quite differently from the old one. If the 'third' Commonwealth was to be an effective instrument for countries such as Canada and Britain to pursue policy objectives, this was something with which they would have to cope. This soon became apparent in handling the aftermath of South Africa's exit.

South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth became effective on 31 May, 1961, when its republican constitution came into force. There were both bilateral and Commonwealth implications to the event. For Commonwealth members, like Canada, maintaining relations with the new republic, these had

to be removed from the Commonwealth framework. The Canadian government wanted to end the privileges it extended to South Africa, but in a manner which did not seem vindictive.¹⁰² Thus, even though the citizenship act no longer recognized South Africa as a Commonwealth country, South African citizens permanently resident in Canada retained their status as British subjects and students on Commonwealth scholarships were allowed to finish their studies. Canada also continued to extend preferential treatment to South African imports because these were based on a bilateral agreement.

With the end of its membership, South Africa was excluded from most Commonwealth activities. This included general Commonwealth consultations such as through the CECC, continuing bodies such as the CEC, and of course, the CPMMs. It also necessitated South Africa's withdrawal from more than thirty official and semi-official bodies which facilitated various kinds of technical co-operation. But even here, the break was not clean. There were two exceptions to this rule. South Africa continued to participate in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Commonwealth Area Communications Scheme for Merchant and Naval Shipping which relied on facilities at the Cape was extended for three years.¹⁰³ There was some attempt to further broaden South African residual participation in Commonwealth functional organizations further. This was unsuccessful because the changes which were coming to the Commonwealth as a whole were even more evident in formal Commonwealth institutions. Unlike the Commonwealth as whole and CPMMs in particular, these institutions had defined structures, including voting procedures. The

¹⁰²Memorandum: Withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth, 23 August, 1962. PAC RG 25 vol 3448 file 1-1962/1. Canadian Papers Prepared for Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, London, September, 1962. Volume II.

¹⁰³Ibid.

effect of changing membership patterns was, therefore, even clearer here than at the CPMMs where such formality was absent.

Soon after South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth and Commonwealth institutions became official, the Canadian scientific liaison officer in London, the official responsible for coordinating Canada's relations within many of the functional Commonwealth organizations of a scientific and technical nature, reported that South Africa was anxious to remain a member of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux (CAB).¹⁰⁴ Canadian officials in the Department of Agriculture, the functional department concerned, found this idea attractive. From a financial perspective, South Africa's withdrawal left a budget deficit corresponding to the eight percent of the total budget which South Africa had previously contributed, a sum of approximately £38,000 per year at the time. Canada, as the second largest contributor after Britain (approximately seventeen percent compared with Britain's twenty five percent), would be expected to carry a large portion of this shortfall.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, South African scientists made valuable contributions to the work of the bureaux, especially in areas such as veterinary science in African climates. For these reasons, officials advocated allowing South Africa to maintain an association with the bureaux in the same way as Ireland and Sudan which had associate status with all the benefits of membership except voting rights. The head of the scientific information section at the Department of Agriculture, who had been part of the Canadian delegation to the 1960 CAB Review Conference reported that on

¹⁰⁴ Memorandum from Glazebrook: Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux. 4 July, 1961. PAC RG 25 86-7/414 vol 10 file 10337-40 part 2. Activities of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux.

¹⁰⁵ SC Barry, Deputy Minister, Department of Agriculture, to Robertson, 12 July, 1961. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 10 file 10337-40 part 2.

the basis of oral statements there, India, Pakistan, Ghana and Nigeria might favour continued South African membership.¹⁰⁶ Officials at DEA and the Cabinet were amenable to continued South African CAB participation so long as there really was general agreement.

In fact, the South African government was not as anxious to remain a member as the scientific community supposed. When the Secretary of the CAB broached the subject with the South African ambassador to Britain, he was told that the South African government was only prepared to consider rejoining the bureaux if a formal invitation were extended detailing the nature of any proposed association.¹⁰⁷ When the CAB Executive Council met in late October, 1961, the subject of a possible invitation was on the agenda. The bureaux were essentially scientific and technical institutions and thus the meetings were ordinarily attended by scientific experts. But on this occasion countries such as Nigeria and Sierra Leone, which had never before sent representatives to bureaux meetings sent personnel from their high commission staff.¹⁰⁸ Representatives of the 'old' Commonwealth supported the offer of membership to South Africa on financial and scientific grounds. Representatives from the 'new' Commonwealth opposed this so vigorously that those from the 'old' Commonwealth did not even bother to

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum: Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux. By George Glazebrook, Commonwealth Division, 4 July, 1961. PAC RG 25 86-7/414 vol 10 file 10337-40 part 2.

¹⁰⁷ Sir Thomas Scrivener, Secretary of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, to Members of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux Executive Council, 20 July, 1961. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 10 file 10337-40 part 2.

¹⁰⁸ J.G. Malloch, Chief Scientific Liaison Officer, to Benjamin Rogers, Canadian Deputy High Commissioner in Britain, 3 November, 1961. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 10 file 10337-40 part 2.

argue the other side of the case. The matter was not brought to a formal vote to avoid showing a division within the membership.¹⁰⁹

What appeared to be emerging in the CAB was control of the institution by the African and Asian members. A year later, in a review of Canadian scientific relations with the Commonwealth, the CAB were cited as the clearest example of "the changes and increasing difficulties ...coming to the fore with the increase in the membership of the Commonwealth."¹¹⁰ While the situation whereby the countries shouldering most of the financial burden were a minority was not new, the report detected "a change in atmosphere in the last two years."¹¹¹ Specifically, there appeared to be a growing tendency for the newer members to group together to outvote the older members and to do so with political motivations even when voting on scientific issues. The issue of South Africa was only one such instance but more generally:

There have been a series of actions which can only be interpreted as leading to the control of the organization by the countries which contribute least to its up-keep financially. Many of the representatives of the newer countries take little or no interest in the working of the organization and only turn up at Council meetings when there are matters to be discussed which may lead to strengthening their position, or which have some possible political significance.¹¹²

On some occasions, including when the issue of South Africa had been discussed, the report claimed that Indian and Pakistani representatives canvassed the attendance of other representatives beforehand. Another

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Memorandum from Malloch: Commonwealth Scientific Relations. March 1962. PAC RG 25 vol 3729 file 5929-40 part 2. British Commonwealth Scientific Collaboration Committee - proposals re: (1946-62). p. 10.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

tendency, evident both at the CAB Executive Committee and at the quinquennial review conference in 1960 was for the newer countries, led by Pakistan, to press for the bureaux to assume new development oriented functions beyond their traditional abstracting services and to disperse the bureaux throughout the Commonwealth.

The challenges and frustrations of dealing with the changing Commonwealth for those comfortable with the 'old' were, perhaps, best summed up in an exchange of letters between Menzies and Macmillan at the beginning of 1962. Menzies complained of the Commonwealth's changing nature resulting from its changing composition and highlighted by the events concerning South African membership. He stated bluntly: "The plain English of it is that the new Commonwealth has nothing like the appeal for us the old one had."¹¹³ Macmillan shared many of these frustrations, replying:

The troublesome way the newly independent nations behave in the United Nations is very similar to the way in which the members of what we call the new Commonwealth tend to behave inside the Commonwealth - especially at the Prime Ministers' Conference... I am bound to confess that I now shrink from any Commonwealth meeting because I know how troublesome it will be, whatever the subjects immediately under discussion.¹¹⁴

These were the same types of misgivings which had prompted misgivings within the Canadian Cabinet, including from Diefenbaker, about the prospect of free immigration within the Commonwealth somehow being foisted on Canada by the new members. Even if part of Diefenbaker longed for a Commonwealth he had never experienced, his government forged ahead with cementing ties with the emerging 'third' Commonwealth. It was, in the end, the exigencies of this

¹¹³ Menzies to Macmillan, 15 January, 1962. PRO PREM 11/3665. Correspondence with Menzies on Future of Commonwealth (1962).

¹¹⁴ Macmillan to Menzies, 8 February, 1962. PRO PREM 11/3665.

new Commonwealth that had conditioned Canadian responses to issues such as the admission of small states and the continuation of South Africa's membership.

Changes resulting from the admission of many new and often small members would reduce even further the tenuous affinities between members and increase the already wide diversity in political and economic interests among members, but it was the only means of maintaining the Commonwealth's effectiveness as a bridge to the developing world. The South African withdrawal demonstrated how much of the old Commonwealth had been swept away, but it was a precondition for accommodating new members. As dramatic as the changes in the Commonwealth were, there was basic continuity in Canadian policy towards it. Canadian policy accepted the flow of events and went with what worked rather than trying to direct them to make them work towards something else. This was obvious in the attitude towards membership and aid where traditional Canadian openness continued. Even on South Africa, where Diefenbaker's final position marked a departure from the past practice of separating distaste for apartheid from the Commonwealth relationship, the critical consideration was preserving the Commonwealth 'bridge'. Adapting to the Commonwealth's 'winds of change' was relatively easy for the Canadian government because its interests were best served by precisely that. There were no messy trade-offs such as those confronting Britain. Unlike the failed Commonwealth trade initiatives which tried to use the Commonwealth for a purpose for which it was unsuited, Canadian policy and objectives better matched what the Commonwealth could realistically be expected to do. All that Canadian interests required was that the Commonwealth serve as a bridge to Africa just as it had to Asia, and Canadian actions tried constructively to make this possible.

CHAPTER 6 - THE NORTH WIND OF CHANGE: BRITAIN AND EUROPE

Adjusting to change within the Commonwealth at the beginning of the 1960s was not simply a matter of the 'old' Commonwealth adapting to the new. Members also had to consider Britain's evolving relations with Europe. Like the issues of membership and South Africa, Britain's application for EEC-membership raised questions about the Commonwealth's future; its role for members; and the glue which would hold it together. The Canadian government's response was in marked contrast to the general pattern of Canada's Commonwealth relations. Whereas in most instances - those in which the stimulus for change came from new members - Canada showed itself to be extremely accommodative, in this case, the Diefenbaker government, for the most part against the advice of its officials, tried to thwart change. The root cause of the differences within the Canadian government were varying assessments not only of the economic consequences to Canada, but also of the effect on the Commonwealth of Britain joining the EEC.

At stake were the Commonwealth's role as an economic unit and Britain's centrality to this. These had lasted since the first Commonwealth. Accepting changes to them was more difficult than accepting the other aspects of the third Commonwealth for a prime minister who liked to emphasize the Commonwealth's subsidiary role in Canadian foreign policy, that of a counterweight to the United States. Diefenbaker, seeing Canadian and Commonwealth interests as identical, embarked on a personal crusade to save the Commonwealth. It was, however, a misplaced effort which served neither and had little to do with the Commonwealth's role in Canadian foreign policy.

Finding a Solution to Europe: First The EFTA

Britain's trade relations with Europe had been keenly followed in Commonwealth economic discussions since the launching of Plan G in the autumn of 1956. Then, the British government argued that Britain's involvement in European trading arrangements was both economically necessary in view of the impending establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and politically desirable in terms of a strong and united Western Europe.¹ Before its electoral defeat, the St. Laurent government, notwithstanding its concerns regarding the possible loss of British markets, had concurred. This was, with varying degrees of wariness, also accepted by the prime ministers of the other Commonwealth members, including Diefenbaker, at the 1957 CPMM. Later, the September, 1957, Mont Tremblant finance ministers' meeting endorsed the British proposals for an 'outward' looking European Free Trade Area (EFTA) encompassing the six EEC states, Britain and other OEEC members wishing to participate, on the grounds that it would broaden the advantages of European unity by expanding world trade.² Given the implications for Commonwealth members of a European trade arrangement involving Britain, the ministers also agreed on the need for effective and continuous consultation.

The determination to be consulted throughout any negotiations underscored the high salience of this aspect of British policy for other Commonwealth members. For each except Canada, Britain was by far the main

¹Memorandum: U.K. Association with Europe and Developments in Other European Organisations. (Brief prepared by the Foreign Office, GEN 585), May, 1957. PRO DO 35/7129 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting 1957: U.K. Association with Europe and Developments in Other European Organisations. [file WES 165/33/3]

²Meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers, Mont Tremblant, Quebec. Communiqué, 1 October, 1957. PRO DO 35/5642 Proceedings of Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, Mont Tremblant, Quebec, 1957. [file EC 537/88/16]

trading partner. For Canada, Britain was the second largest market, and, although dwarfed Canada's trade with the US, was important beyond its nominal value for a government anxious to reduce Canadian dependence on the American market. Diefenbaker was also acutely aware of the importance of wheat sales, the largest component of Canadian exports to Britain, to his political base in Western Canada.

Agriculture was a sensitive area for other Commonwealth members as well. The EEC states, however, insisted that in exchange for British manufactured goods' duty free entry to their markets, they should gain easier access to British markets for their agricultural goods. As early as the summer of 1957, it was evident that the talks would not be successful if the British government refused concessions on agriculture.³ Other contentious areas included external tariffs and commercial policy, internal economic and social policies and institutional arrangements.⁴ As before with respect to the ECSC and the Treaty of Rome, the British government resisted yielding national sovereignty in the manner envisaged by the architects of this new Europe. Differences over the degree of policy harmonization required from Britain seemed, like those over agriculture, irreconcilable. French President Charles de Gaulle was particularly obstreperous. Thus, as the 1 January, 1959, implementation date for trade discrimination by the six signatories of the Treaty of Rome against non-members approached, the EFTA negotiations were stalled.

³C.C.(57)62(1), Free Trade Area, 27 August, 1957. PRO CAB 128/31 part 2. Cabinet Conclusions.

⁴Great Britain, Negotiations for a European Free Trade Area. Report on the Course of Negotiations up to December, 1958. Cmnd 648 (London: HMSO, 1959)

Such were the problems facing the British government when Diefenbaker visited London at the end of October, 1958, to begin his world tour. Fresh from the 'successful' CTEC where the British government had again assured Commonwealth members that their interests would be protected in any deal with Europe, Diefenbaker's generally understanding attitude towards British policy did not stop him from publicly extolling the virtues of Commonwealth trade and economic cooperation.⁵ He did, nevertheless, undertake to do what he could to help the British.

Diefenbaker's next stop was Paris. The position he took in talks with de Gaulle on European trading arrangements was analogous in most respects to Britain's. He stressed that the Canadian government was not opposed to the idea of European integration, but did not think that this should be done behind barriers to cut Canadian access to existing and future markets. When de Gaulle responded with a reference to Commonwealth preferences and the objectives of the recently concluded CTEC, Diefenbaker replied that the preferences were not of great importance and that their "most important element was more of a sentimental character."⁶ While not specifically intended to convince de Gaulle that the Commonwealth relationship posed no obstacles to British participation in Europe, the support for a liberal, that is open and outward looking, Europe was clear.

⁵ Diefenbaker, "Canada and the Commonwealth". Excerpts from a Speech to the Commonwealth and Empire Industries Association, November 4, 1958. Statements and Speeches 58/44.

⁶ Telegram from the Canadian Embassy in Paris. Prime Minister's Talks with General de Gaulle, 6 November, 1958. PAC RG 25 ACC 25/2/88 vol 3523 file 12687-M-1-40. Prime Minister's Tour 1958: Discussions with Foreign and Commonwealth Leaders.

The Canadian government was very concerned about the inability of European countries to reach an agreement before the advent of EEC discrimination against outsiders. It most emphatically did not want the problem solved through what seemed the most likely alternatives. A unilateral offer by the Six giving tariff reductions to all GATT countries but quota concessions only to OEEC members and a long term settlement involving British concessions at the expense of Commonwealth trade was undesirable.⁷ So too was the creation of a second European trading group which would crystalize the division of Western Europe. For these reasons, the Canadian government was willing to do what it could to help overcome the obstacles to the British proposals thrown up by de Gaulle.

The problem for Britain was that Canadian officials and ministers felt there was little that Canada could effectively do to help Britain. The Canadians considered Diefenbaker, and Canada along with him, to be in de Gaulle's 'bad books'. During their November talks, Diefenbaker had disagreed strenuously with de Gaulle's suggestion for an American-British-French triumvirate to direct NATO's policy. After discussing possible Canadian intervention with Fleming on 1 December, 1958, Garner reported:

the Canadians were in rather bad odour in Paris since General de Gaulle was very jealous of the intimate arrangements for consultation which existed between the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, and was irritated that Canada was not only usurping a position which France thought to be hers by right but appeared to be opposed to France securing a special position for herself.⁸

⁷Garner to Rumbold, 3 December, 1958. PRO DO 35/8381. Canadian Attitudes to European Negotiations 1958-60. [file EC 215/1/3]

⁸Garner to Rumbold, 2 December, 1958. PRO DO 35/8381.

The Canadian government did approach the American government about the possibility of the United States trying to bring about a settlement of the EFTA question,⁹ but there was little else, Canadian officials told the British, that they could do. If at times, British officials despaired of the Canadian's inability to look beyond narrow parochial interests in some trade matters, such as their obsession with the remnants of British dollar discrimination,¹⁰ at least they could find solace in the Canadian efforts to be as helpful as possible with respect to the EFTA as the lesser of two evils.

Whether or not the Six participated in the EFTA proposal made little difference as far as its effects on Canada. The Six, with their Treaty of Rome arrangement were a separate problem. Nevertheless, while Canada's trade with the Six was growing, its trade with Britain was still far more than with all of them combined. Maintaining Canadian access to the British market was the Canadian government's most important trade interest in Europe. The EFTA's provisions allowing the Scandinavian countries, whose economies were similar to Canada's except with respect to agriculture, to compete equally with Canada were unfortunate, but at least Canadian agricultural exports could continue. Before, during and after the 1 January deadline, the Canadian government never wavered in its support for the principle that any European trading arrangement should work towards furthering the GATT and expanding world trade more generally.¹¹

⁹Minute from MJ Moynihan, Assistant Secretary, CRO, to Costar, 6 January, 1959. PRO DO 35/8381.

¹⁰Minute from Moynihan, to Costar, 2 January, 1959; and Minute from Rumbold to Moynihan and Costar, 6 January, 1959. PRO DO 35/8381. See Chapter 4 (draft 1) p. 57.

¹¹Aide Memoire Handed to the Governments of the Six and the European Economic Commission by the Canadian Government, June, 1959. PRO DO 35/8381.

The EFTA talks remained blocked and the unwanted second European trade group became a reality. In November, 1959, representatives from Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Austria and Portugal met in Stockholm to sign the treaty establishing the European Free Trade Association (also, and henceforth, EFTA). Under its terms an industrial free trade area between the signatories would come into effect in July, 1960. Failing to establish an association with the Six compatible with safeguarding Britain's national sovereignty and its Commonwealth links, Britain now had its own 'Seven'.

The Canadian government was naturally concerned about the emerging division within Western Europe. The Berlin Crisis, precipitated by the November, 1958, announcement of Soviet intentions to terminate the Four Power occupation of Berlin and hand Soviet responsibilities over to the East German government, had underscored the need for continued Western political unity to confront Soviet policy in Europe. There were, then, important foreign policy interests at stake for Canada, but the Commonwealth's survival was not, initially, one of them. There was nothing during the final EFTA negotiations to indicate that the Canadian government was alarmed that Britain's new trading arrangements presaged a diminution of the Commonwealth's importance to Britain. Indeed, as the talks neared completion, the Canadian attitude towards them was extremely understanding. At the CECC's inaugural meeting in September, 1959, for example, the Australian and New Zealand representatives pressed for Commonwealth participation in the EFTA negotiations and a joint Commonwealth position there. Fleming and the Canadian delegation, together with the South Africans, opposed such a development.¹² With the subsiding

¹²Memorandum to United Kingdom High Commissioners from Lintott, 8 October, 1959. PRO DO 35/8436 Report on the First Meeting of the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council, London, September, 1959. [file EC

of the government's initial frenzy about Commonwealth trade issues, it was less pressing for Canada than for the Antipodean duo. The traditional Canadian resistance to joint 'Commonwealth positions' asserted itself and the Canadians argued that the EFTA was a matter of British domestic policy. As such, consultative mechanisms, such as the CECC, were the appropriate avenue for informing the British government of the interests of Commonwealth members and it was up to the British government to act with these in mind.

The British government expected more objections from the Canadian government about the EFTA than turned out to be the case. In a brief prepared for Home for talks with Green during a visit by the Canadian SSEA to London two weeks before the signing of the EFTA treaty, CRO officials observed that the EFTA would reverse preferences where applicable and deprive Canada of MFN status.¹³ The GATT provisions dealing with free trade areas permitted the latter, but officials expected some resistance from the Canadians not least because the 1947 Exchange of Letters eliminating contractual preferences had guaranteed Canada MFN status. Green, in his talks with British ministers did not enthusiastically embrace the EFTA but raised no positive objections. He was more concerned about the effect of political sub-groups within NATO, especially by reports of the scope of proposed political consultation among the Six.¹⁴ The Foreign Secretary reassured him that

537/88/26]

¹³ Brief for the Secretary of State (for talks with Mr. Howard Green, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs). European Free Trade Association (E.F.T.A.) and the "the Seven and the Six", 29 October, 1959. PRO DO 35/8381.

¹⁴ Note of a Conversation at 10 Downing Street at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, November 3, 1959. PRO PREM 11/2607. Discussions with Mr. H. Green, Canadian Minister for External Affairs During His Visit to the United Kingdom, November, 1959.

for geographical reasons, if for no others, the Seven could never be a political group. Its object was to keep Europe liberal in trade matters and to ensure that the Six did not become a close-knit protectionist group.¹⁵

Green accepted this and added that "his understanding was that [Britain's] main object in forming the Seven was to put [itself] in a better position for negotiation with the Six."¹⁶

Ministers such as Green were much more obliging on developments in Europe than the, from the British view, less forthcoming Canadian officials. At the meeting between Green and Home, Robertson, who had been reappointed USSEA in October, 1958, after Leger's appointment Canadian ambassador to France, made it clear that he felt British objectives would be better achieved through GATT, where, he felt, the French were then willing to be flexible.¹⁷ Three months later, when the president of the Board of Trade visited Ottawa in early February, 1960, for discussions with Canadian ministers and their officials, this dichotomy was still evident. Ministers were much more sympathetic towards the British position than their officials. The virtual end of dollar area discrimination in keeping with British commitments at the 1958 CTEC no doubt helped to put Canadian ministers in a positive frame of mind, as did the British resolve to exclude agriculture from the EFTA. This made it the lesser of two evils. Garner, however, focused on the fact that ministers such as Fleming had what he considered a good grasp of the political implications of relations between the EEC and EFTA and for this reason raised no objections to the possible negative

¹⁵ Record of a Conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Howard Green, Canadian Minister for External Affairs, 2 November, 1959. Foreign Office Print November 5, 1959. PRO PREM 11/2607.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

consequences for Canada.¹⁸ This gave Canadian officials less than their due and was an overly optimistic assessment of Canadian ministers' willingness to accept too much change in European trading patterns, but with no overt ministerial objections to developments thus far, it was not unreasonable. For his part, Diefenbaker, having had his hands burned on trade issues early in his tenure, seemed prepared to accept the British line.¹⁹

Ministerial views were, if anything, what had changed in Ottawa. The views of Canadian officials were unmodified. Garner pointedly observed in a report to Home that in the background he saw:

the traditional 'doctrinaire' outlook of Canadian officialdom, their relish in moralising about the duties of others and their readiness to see themselves as the keeper of the GATT conscience and the guardians of the interests of 'the rest of the world.'²⁰

However, they had a good appreciation of the political dynamics as Garner well knew from his contacts with them.²¹ Canadian officials sympathized with the broad political objectives of European integration, with the caveat that a rift within NATO threatened core Canadian interests.²² What preoccupied officials in DEA and other departments, such as Trade and Commerce, was the prospect that any resolution of the differences between the EEC and EFTA falling short of a full free trade area under GATT would create

¹⁸ Dispatch 2 from Garner to Home, 5 February, 1960. PRO DO 35/8381.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Dispatch 2 from Garner to Home, 5 February, 1960. PRO DO 35/8381.

²¹ Letter 1200/9 from Garner to Rumbold, 31 December, 1959. PRO DO 35/8381.

²² Brief II A 2: European Economic Developments (Department of Trade and Commerce), April, 1960. PAC RG 25 vol 3446 file 1-1960/3 part 2. Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers: London, May, 1960 - Briefs.

preferences at the expense of what was left of Canadian preferences in British markets and Canada's MFN access to all the markets in question. This was clearly stated by senior Canadian officials at the June, 1960, meeting of the UKCCC. They had supported the original British proposal for a broad, liberal European free trade area in 1956, but now Canadian officials considered that such an area was now unrealistic and all that would result from talks between the EEC and EFTA would be a preferential arrangement.²³ Canadian officials had always been prepared to bargain away preferences, but the situation as it was developing offered little prospect of Canada receiving compensation for the loss of preferences or MFN status.

The EFTA was not comparable to the EEC in terms of the size of the potential market. British intentions behind its creation had been defensive, but having this more limited EFTA did not entirely remove the need for Britain to establish some form of relationship with the larger EEC. How this might be accomplished was unclear, even to the British government.²⁴ One thing that was clear, notwithstanding Commonwealth markets' inability to ensure Britain's long term economic prosperity, as demonstrated by the meager results on trade of the 1958 trade conference and the failed initiative for free trade with Canada, the British government was not prepared to sacrifice close ties with the Commonwealth. These ties were only one aspect of a strong preference within the British government for a nationally determined, liberal trade policy, but they were an important element distinguishing Britain from its erstwhile European partners and their more collective and protectionist approach to trade.

²³UKCCC(60)4 United Kingdom/Canada Continuing Committee. London, June 1960. European Problems. Note by the Treasury, 23 June, 1960. PRO DO 35/8381.

²⁴Macmillan, Pointing the Way. p. 58.

The Commonwealth and Europe in a Global British Policy

The Commonwealth helped define Britain's global role, but that role came with costs. These included military expenditure, keeping a strong and stable pound and meeting the expectations from Commonwealth countries for development assistance. The Suez debacle demonstrated the precariousness of the return on this tremendous investment in status, especially regarding Britain's military capacity to act independently. The white paper on defence issued in April, 1957, reflected this conclusion and foreshadowed severe cuts to Britain's military forces, including the elimination of several overseas garrisons.²⁵ Ultimately, the white paper stressed, Britain's capacity to bear a heavy military burden rested on a strong economy. This was equally important to preserving other aspects of Britain's great power trappings, including leadership of the Commonwealth. And, just as Britain's military commitments were under review, so too was the Commonwealth's role in British policy.

The link between Britain's economy and its world position pervaded a 1958 report on Britain's future in world affairs. This report was the product of a high level interdepartmental committee of officials, chaired by Brook and including the permanent under-secretaries of the Treasury, the Ministry of Defence, the Colonial Office, the CRO and the FO. The exercise, a FO initiative, reviewed Britain's overseas commitments in light of the available resources. The main issue, as the FO saw things at the outset, was whether Britain's economic situation at the beginning of 1958 and the government's financial policy designed to meet it, could be reconciled with

²⁵Great Britain. White Paper on Defence. Cmnd 124. (London: HMSO, 1957).

the expenditure necessary to maintain Britain's position in the world.²⁶ The FO and Treasury both agreed that if, for any reason, sterling weakened, Britain would be unable to remain a leading state in the world system.²⁷ The CRO held similar views, but framed them in terms of Britain's Commonwealth relationships and their importance to Britain's world position. The CRO, as it did before 1956, maintained that Britain's status relied heavily on maintaining a cohesive Commonwealth in which Britain played the leading role. Were the Commonwealth to disintegrate, Britain, in this view, would be reduced to being a continental European power because the association with the Commonwealth enhanced Britain's influence with its allies and enhanced its global status.²⁸ The cohesion of the Commonwealth itself depended on British leadership, and, Britain's ability to fulfill this leadership role rested on the strength of its economy and on the strength and stability of sterling. This increasingly questionable premise that the Commonwealth could somehow be managed to replace the Empire, including some of its economic functions, was reiterated in the final report.

In 1959, Macmillan ordered a more extensive examination of future British foreign policy. Again, a critical consideration was how best to align Britain's commitments with available resources.²⁹ The study's evaluation of the Commonwealth relationship suggested that outside the CRO, there was a growing willingness to submit the changing Commonwealth to more

²⁶ ZP 9/9/G Future Policy. Brief for a Meeting of Permanent Secretaries on 4 February, 1958, 3 February, 1958. PRO FO 371/135625. Future of the United Kingdom in World Affairs.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ ZP 25/110/G Future Policy Exercise: Terms of Reference Request by Mr. Ignatief. Minute by PS Ziegler, 3 December, 1959. PRO FO 371/143709. Future UK Foreign Policy.

critical, and perhaps more realistic, analysis than previously was the case. Its general conclusions³⁰ predicted that in the international setting conditioning the policy environment, the political, economic and ideological struggle between East and West would intensify. This would be especially true in the developing world.³¹ From this last point should have followed a prominent role for the Commonwealth in the study's recommendations on Britain's external policies in the approaching decade. But rather than emphasizing the advantages which Britain's leadership of the Commonwealth would lend its role in world affairs in this respect, the report foresaw a decline in Britain's relative power and influence and the Commonwealth's value was phrased more ambiguously than had previously been the case in similar reports.

The Commonwealth was considered to be "an entity both of particular value to the United Kingdom and contributing generally to the stability and survival of the free world."³² In both roles, however, the report considered that the Commonwealth's precise importance was difficult to assess. This was, it conceded, because of its nature: "while the Commonwealth would not survive if its ties were made definitive and tangible, their lack of definition makes their value largely imponderable."³³ In

³⁰The study on future policy, FO(60)1 of 24 February, 1960, was circulated to cabinet as memorandum C.(60)35 and is closed for fifty years. The discussion of its contents is based on available extracts and descriptive minutes.

³¹Notes on Overseas Policies for Discussion with Mr. Diefenbaker, Mr. Menzies and Mr. Nash. ZP 25/39/G Future Policy Report: Points from the Report Which the Prime Minister Might be Advised to Make at His Meeting with the Prime Ministers of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. [n.d. - February/March, 1960]. PRO FO 371/152132. Future UK Foreign Relations (1960).

³²Extract from Future Policy Study 1960-70 FP(60), 24 February, 1960. A Part I. PRO FO 371/161235. Future Development of the Commonwealth, 1961.

³³Ibid.

economic terms, the Commonwealth still accounted for a high proportion of British trade and offered a network of trading and financial interests based on sterling, but Commonwealth preferences were a wasting asset and as a whole it was eroding as an economic unit. The report conceded that the Commonwealth might continue as a source of political influence buttressing Britain's standing as a world power, especially as a link to the developing world. It was not the "priceless political asset"³⁴ possession of nuclear weapons represented, but the assessment was still on balance that the Commonwealth was a net positive asset for Britain. It was also clear that Britain was more important to the Commonwealth than the Commonwealth was to Britain. What the report concluded a strong Britain and thus a viable Commonwealth required, was British participation in European economic integration. Without it, the Commonwealth would either disintegrate, or at the very least, and equally significant for British policy, British leadership of the Commonwealth would be weakened.³⁵

In considering the report, the British government was mindful of the relative balance of British interests respecting full EEC membership. Membership could prevent several dangers. Most obvious, and important, was the danger of Britain's exclusion from Europe with the consequences of this for Britain's "standing in the Commonwealth and in the Atlantic Alliance and the cohesion of the Alliance itself."³⁶ Joining would also alleviate American suspicions that Britain did not share the American attraction to the

³⁴United Kingdom Strategic Nuclear Policy, 27 January, 1960. ZP 25/24/G Future Policy Working Group. Minutes of a Meeting Held on 26 January, 1960. PRO FO 371/152131.

³⁵Extract from Future Policy Study 1960-70 FP(60), 24 February, 1960. A Part I. PRO FO 371/161235.

³⁶Ibid.

concept of a strong united Europe. It would also reduce the risk of the EEC replacing Britain as America's 'chief partner'. As members, Britain could provide a counterweight to any short-term threat from France or long-term threat from Germany.

Joining the EEC would be no simple task. The British government, having presumably surmounted its aversion to delegating elements of sovereignty, would have to overcome probable Commonwealth objections. There would also inevitably be objections from domestic agricultural interests, the other groups which had posed long-standing obstacles to British participation in the EEC. To these, was now added a new group whose interests had to be taken into account, Britain's EFTA partners. Finally, there was the question as to whether the Six wanted Britain as a member. The manner by which these obstacles were overcome had profound implications for Britain's place in the world upon joining the EEC, as British officials knew full well.³⁷ Clearly it was a matter which required further study.

Such a study was not long in coming. On 27 May, the British Cabinet's European Economic Association Committee agreed that the broad choice facing Britain was either to seek a close association with the EEC or to continue to remain aloof while trying to do all that it could to mitigate the economic and political dangers of a divided Western Europe. Macmillan subsequently circulated a list of questions among relevant departments about the future of the EEC and the broad economic and political considerations determining the best option. The responses were examined by a committee of officials from the departments concerned which produced a report on the subject for Cabinet. This report distinguished between formally joining the EEC and concluding an

³⁷ Ibid.

agreement closely associating Britain with it. Significantly, the study was done on the basis of actually joining. The immediate impact on the Commonwealth would likely be considerably less with close association than with full British membership but close association was seen as a poor second choice.³⁸ It would likely take longer to negotiate and come at a high price. Even then, Britain would still not be a member of the EEC's inner councils. Britain would continue to face the same political problems and French objections to an arrangement with Britain would be more difficult to overcome if Britain were only willing to go as far as 'close association'.

If the Six 'succeeded', Britain would suffer politically being outside because its relative and absolute influence in world affairs would be bound to diminish.³⁹ On the other hand, British membership in a successful EEC, could enhance Britain's global influence. While still retaining to some degree the right to speak on its own account, it would speak as part of a European bloc. In an alternative scenario, were the Six to 'fail', Western interests would be severely damaged and the resultant weakening of Europe would pose serious strategic problems for Britain. It would be too late for Britain to join to prevent a failure when a breakdown was seen to be coming, but if already in, Britain might strengthen the European bloc and prevent its disintegration.⁴⁰ Membership of the inner councils of the EEC, then, had attractions beyond the economic benefits.

³⁸C.(60)107 Association with the European Economic Community. Note by the Secretary to the Cabinet, 6 July, 1960. Annex: The Six and the Seven - The Long-term Objective. Report of the Economic Steering (Europe) Committee. PRO CAB 120/102.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

Joining the EEC would have a price. This would have to be paid in terms of the Commonwealth, British agriculture and horticulture, the commitment to the EFTA and possible negative reactions from other British trading partners such as the United States. Of these, the report identified political and economic relations with the Commonwealth, together with the more general question of free entry of specific goods, important to Commonwealth countries but to others as well, as the most difficult problems facing Britain in joining the EEC.⁴¹ On the political side, the report considered it likely that Britain could convince the EEC Six of the importance of safeguarding the Commonwealth political relationship by demonstrating the value to the free world of close ties with both the older and newer members.

The economic aspect of sorting out the arrangements under which many Commonwealth products (as well as those of other third parties) received duty-free entry to Britain would be more complicated. Handling this would likely emerge as the most crucial issue to be resolved in a British bid for EEC membership. Insisting on current arrangements would effectively preclude joining by forestalling any participation in EEC agricultural policies. The other extreme was accepting the EEC common tariff and giving the Six more favourable treatment than Commonwealth countries. That, the report stated, was inconceivable. The British government might be able to accept the common tariff on manufactured goods without placing too great a strain on the economies of Commonwealth countries since the only member with significant exports of such goods to Britain was Canada. In exchange, the report suggested that Britain seek the easing of restrictions of imports from low cost countries (except Japan). Raw materials posed less of a problem. For the most part they could enter duty free so Britain could more easily accept

⁴¹ Ibid.

the common tariff or come to an alternative arrangements. Similarly, tropical foodstuffs were unlikely to present much of a problem. The biggest problems, the report anticipated, would arise over temperate foodstuffs. The claims of Commonwealth, American and British producers would all have to be resolved in some manner.

As the British government examined opening talks with the EEC on British membership, the Commonwealth was never forgotten. The Macmillan government was willing to look beyond the Commonwealth but had not abandoned it. If anything, there was simply a more businesslike approach to dealing with what was once an unquestioned mainstay of Britain's global pretensions. This was exemplified by the outcome of an exercise initiated in May, 1960, by the FO's Steering Committee, its policy planning body. The committee commissioned an examination of what Britain could get out of the Commonwealth in the next ten years.⁴² It concluded that the Commonwealth's value as a prop for Britain's world position would continue to diminish, but Britain, basing its Commonwealth relationship on a solid foundation of self-interest, would still receive advantages from the relationship.⁴³ However,

The limited scope for the development of the Commonwealth as an association; the possible long-term decline in its usefulness as a direct support for our international standing; and the need to bring every weapon to bear in order to ensure a satisfactory outcome to the East/West struggle suggest that our basic approach should be to regard the Commonwealth as an instrument of policy. This would mean regarding it more as a means and less as an end in itself.⁴⁴

⁴²WP/28/6 Minute by PE Ramsbotham, 12 December, 1960. PRO FO 371/161235.

⁴³S.C.(61)26 The Commonwealth, June, 1961. PRO FO 371/161235.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Like the other recent assessments of the Commonwealth's place in British policy, a strong British economy was seen as a prerequisite for a strong Commonwealth capable of producing any significant benefits for Britain. The most obvious means to secure the strong economy on which the Commonwealth depended but could not provide, was through closer ties with the emerging European trading system.

Canada: Coming to Terms With Britain and the EEC

The British government wrestled with the problem of Britain's relations with Europe over the summer of 1960. In September, it informed Commonwealth governments of its intention to explore the possibilities of concluding a formal arrangement with the EEC. This notification occurred in the lead-up to the meeting of the CECC at the end of the month. The agenda for this meeting offered a neat summary of the challenges facing the Commonwealth. The main topics of discussion included the balance of payments situation of sterling area countries during the global economic downturn that they were all experiencing and contemplation of the proposals for African development which the 1960 CPMM had delegated to the CECC. The most important topic, however, would now be Britain's possible association with the EEC. Edward Heath, made Lord Privy Seal in July with responsibility for the European trade talks, would brief the Commonwealth ministers on his recent talks with European governments. He planned to portray the situation as hopeful, but would stress that the British government was not currently engaged in formal talks with the EEC and thus had no proposals to present to the Commonwealth.⁴⁵

⁴⁵C.C.(60)50(3) Commonwealth Economic Consultation, 15 September, 1960.
PRO CAB 128/34. Cabinet Conclusions.

The Canadian Cabinet did not wait for formal proposals as it reviewed instructions for the Canadian delegation's position at the CECC meeting. The prospect of losing even some of Canada's access to British markets was unwelcome, particularly at a time of worsening economic outlook for the near future. Lurking in the background were fears among Canadian ministers that British membership would weaken the Commonwealth and leave Canada more dependent than ever on the American market. Diefenbaker, ever fearful of American political and economic domination, still clung to the notion that Britain and the Commonwealth could somehow balance this American preponderance. The need to prevent any loss of access to British markets, therefore, required a strong response.

Officials at DEA, however, doubted that given British needs, the Canadian bargaining position was strong enough to do much about these problems.⁴⁶ They recommended that Canada develop contingency plans to protect essential Canadian interests. Because of this, the Canadian position on European trade as set out by officials tried to balance Canadian interests with British needs.

In essence, this was that the delegation would take a strong and forthright position in defence of Canadian essential interests, recognizing, at the same time that it would be inappropriate to try to veto what the U.K. might attempt in Europe.⁴⁷

Cabinet adopted these recommendations, but the prospect of closer British trade ties with Europe was still alarming. Ministers were divided only on how to react to what all agreed was a potentially dangerous development. Green, the SSEA, thought that the Canadian position was far too weak. His

⁴⁶ USSEA to SSEA, 7 September, 1960. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 171 file 12447-40. European Common Market (Customs Union) and Free Trade Area.

⁴⁷ PAC RG 2 vol 2747. Cabinet Conclusions, 14 September, 1960.

reasoning was that since Britain was in a difficult economic position, it was bound to move towards Europe regardless of Canadian interests which it was not sufficiently considering. He therefore thought that the ministers attending the coming meeting should be tough and tell the British ministers precisely what Canada's worries were. Ironically, given the relatively harder bargaining position which officials in Finance, Trade and Commerce, and his own DEA had maintained in comparison with their political masters as recently as that spring, he felt that "officials dealing with this matter were inclined to be too considerate of non-Canadian susceptibilities."⁴⁸ Churchill, the Minister of Trade and Commerce and, together with Fleming, one of the Canadian representatives attending the meeting, defended the policy as presented by observing that preferences were being eroded anyway and that there was little that Canada could do without jeopardizing the existing cooperative relationship and risk losing the British market. An effort at maintaining a balanced approach would enable the Canadian government to be firm without risking this.

Fleming and Churchill returned from the CECC meeting with different assessments. They reported to their cabinet colleagues that most of the other Commonwealth delegations had strongly attacked the idea of closer British ties with Europe. Fleming, however, observed that it was obvious that some members of the British Cabinet felt that with the strength of the Soviet bloc and the growing strength of the EEC, Britain had no choice but to join the EEC.⁴⁹ Churchill, on the other hand, felt that the British government would be forced to reconsider its position since only fourteen percent of its export trade was with the EEC and forty four percent was with

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ PAC RG 2 vol 2747. Cabinet Conclusions, 23 September, 1960.

Commonwealth countries.⁵⁰ In his opinion, the only way joining the EEC could be perceived as an attractive option for Britain was if the political aspects of the European situation were to override the economics.

Churchill also voiced what was to become a growing concern within the ranks of the Canadian Cabinet. This was that should the British government choose to neglect what he saw as the economics of the situation and join the EEC, a leadership vacuum would be created in the Commonwealth. This could severely weaken the Commonwealth and even lead to its dissolution. British membership in the EEC, then, could be a turning point in the Commonwealth's history.

Canadian officials, while remaining resolute, were not nearly as alarmed. Agricultural exports would be hurt if Britain joined the EEC because of the common tariff. Raw materials except aluminum had free entry to the EEC so that was not seen as a problem. But manufactured goods, a small but growing component of Canadian exports to Britain would be hurt. Nevertheless, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance wrote to the USSEA in June, 1961:

even if the worst happened, and Britain felt compelled to join the Common Market without extracting any concessions that mitigated the commercial danger to Canada, the Canadian economy would not be mortally wounded. But it would be hurt - painfully hurt in sensitive spots... It may be that the British government can and should be dissuaded from their new departure. But if they decide to go ahead, we must put forward our very best endeavours, at all levels and in all places, to promote our commercial interest and defend our commercial rights.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Memorandum by Plumptre: The Montreal Tories of 1849: Their Message to Us Today, 9 June, 1961. PAC MG 30 E163 vol 18. Norman Robertson Papers. Personal Correspondence 1961 (file 2).

However much some Canadians, including members of the government, might feel abandoned by the 'Mother Country' if Britain joined the EEC and erected barriers to Canadian exports, the crux of the economic problem would likely come down to the impracticality or political impossibility of Canada forming special economic relationships of its own, especially with the United States. Even the previous Liberal government had concerns about Canada's growing reliance on the United States if Britain entered into a trade agreement in Europe.⁵² These concerns were magnified by the Conservatives - reducing dependence on trade with the United States had been a constant theme of the government since 1957. So while a trade deal with the United States may have seemed an obvious solution to the problem of ensuring markets for Canadian goods, it was a route ruled out from the start.⁵³

The government's view of relations with the United States presented something of a paradox. Despite fearing that American economic domination would produce political domination as well, the Diefenbaker government continued to link Canada's defence policy ever more closely with that of the United States. In February, 1959, Cabinet had cancelled the Canadian Avro Arrow advanced interceptor programme because of mounting costs and the refusal of the American military to purchase Canadian aircraft.⁵⁴ This contributed to the January, 1960, decision to begin negotiating Canadian acceptance of American nuclear weapons to arm alternative, American produced,

⁵²Meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers. Minutes of a meeting held in the Canadian Joint Staff Building, Washington, 28 September, 1956, F.M.(W)(56) 2nd Meeting. PRO DO 35/5637 Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting, Washington 1956: minutes and records of meetings [file EC 537/88/10].

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴The 'Arrow debate' is detailed in James Dow, The Arrow. (Toronto: Lorimer, 1979).

interceptor missiles.⁵⁵ These developments promised even greater Canadian dependence on the United States in defence matters. They would also trigger huge political problems for the government when it subsequently tried to renege on accepting the warheads. In defence, there were no viable alternatives to the United States. Nor were there in the development of shared resources, and the Colombia River Treaty, signed by Eisenhower in January, 1961 as his last official act as American president, suggested an incipient continentalism at work in the Canadian economy. In trade, however, the government clung to the notion that the Commonwealth, through Britain, could serve as a counterweight to the United States. Because of this, in the absence of politically feasible economic alternatives, promotion of commercial interests was poised to take on a dangerously emotional tenor within the government.

By mid-1961, the British government had yet to formally announce its intention to join the EEC. In May, however, it assured Commonwealth governments that should it begin formal talks, it would increase consultations.⁵⁶ Because the matter required direct political discussions, rather than relying on normal channels, the British government would send a minister to each member. From Canada House, George Drew, urged Diefenbaker, to hold the British to this and adopt a very high standard as to what constituted adequate consultation.⁵⁷ Taking his cue from the British government's gesture, he advocated that it always be at the political level.

⁵⁵PAC RG 2 vol 2446. Cabinet Conclusions, 12 January, 1960.

⁵⁶M/635/60 Draft Telegram from the Prime Minister to Commonwealth Prime Ministers, May, 1961. PRO FO 371/158312. Negotiations with the EEC. Consultations with Commonwealth Countries. [file M/635]

⁵⁷Telegram 2005, Drew to Diefenbaker, 2 June, 1961. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 171 file 12447-40.

even to the point of calling a special CPMM. Drew, for the same reasons as his ex-colleagues now in Cabinet, opposed British EEC-membership and, viewing the EEC as unpopular among the British public, encouraged Diefenbaker to embark on a campaign to convince the British and Canadian publics of the Commonwealth's markets potential.⁵⁸ The real purpose of such high level consultation would be to obstruct the British bid and ensure that the Commonwealth remained paramount in British policy, something Canadian officials were not inclined to do.

The British government followed-through with its undertaking to consult at the political level, but did not let Canadian opposition divert it from its course. In preparation for the announcement of Britain's intent to begin negotiations on EEC membership, British cabinet ministers visited each Commonwealth member to gain their acquiescence. In mid-July, Duncan Sandys, who had replaced Home as Commonwealth Secretary the previous July, visited Ottawa for three days of talks with Canadian ministers. The Canadians acknowledged that the decision whether or not to open negotiations with EEC was a matter for the British government to decide, but they could not conceal their growing apprehension. Sandys promised that if the British government did decide to open negotiations, it would consult Commonwealth governments continuously, but to no avail. The communiqué issued at the meetings' conclusion did not disguise the growing divergence between the two governments. It forthrightly stated:

The Canadian Ministers indicated that their Government's assessment of the situation was different from that put forward by Mr. Sandys. They expressed the grave concern of the Canadian Government about the implications of possible negotiations between Britain and the European Economic Community, and about the political and economic

⁵⁸ Telegram 1833 Drew to Diefenbaker, 18 May, 1961. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 171 file 12447-40.

effects which British membership in the European Economic Community would have on Canada and on the Commonwealth as a whole.⁵⁹

Far from soothing Canadian concerns, the talks exacerbated them. Two months later at the 1961 CECC meeting, Fleming recounted to Selwyn Lloyd, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that Sandys "had given them the impression that the U.K. Cabinet had decided to join the Six at any cost."⁶⁰ This had set ministerial alarm bells ringing in Ottawa.

The Canadian government was not the only Commonwealth government concerned about the effect of a British move towards the EEC. However, in the communiqués issued following analogous visits by British ministers, only Australia emphasized similar concerns about the Commonwealth as a whole.⁶¹ Others, such as New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Cyprus and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland dealt only with the concerns of the individual countries. Following the meetings, in Ceylon, Ghana, Malaya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Singapore there were only cursory statements. The West Indies, besides insisting that its trading relationship with Britain be protected also expressed concern that the trading relationship with Canada must be protected if Britain were to join the EEC. There was, it seemed, widespread apprehension about the economics of British EEC membership, but few indications that the Commonwealth relationship turned on this.

⁵⁹ "Canada: Joint Statement Issued in Ottawa 14 July, 1961", Great Britain. Commonwealth Consultations on Britain's Relations with the European Economic Community. Cmnd 1444 (London: HMSO, 1961)

⁶⁰ Lloyd to Macmillan, 14 September, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3211.

⁶¹ Great Britain. Commonwealth Consultations on Britain's Relations with the European Economic Community. Cmnd 1444.

Despite the reservations of other Commonwealth governments, the British government forged ahead. On 31 July, 1961, Macmillan announced in the House of Commons that his government would enter into talks with the EEC to determine if acceptable terms for British membership could be procured. With the stage thus set, it seems strange that the brief prepared for the Canadian delegation to the CECC meeting scheduled to be held in Accra, Ghana, in September, 1961, anticipated that the British position for the forthcoming negotiations with the EEC would not be the subject of detailed and substantive discussions.⁶² The reasoning behind this was that Canadian officials sensed a consensus among Commonwealth governments, including the British government, that extended consideration of the topic would not be productive at that time. Nevertheless, Cabinet felt that it was important to make Canada's position absolutely clear whenever the opportunity arose. The speaking notes for Hees, who together with Fleming would represent Canada, for example, stressed that "a vital Canadian concern is the preservation of our enormously important U.K. market on which our economy is heavily dependent."⁶³ The economic analysis was questionable, but the government's opposition to British membership in the EEC was clear. The language used would probably spark greater debate where none was supposedly expected; not necessarily substantive discussion given the overcharged atmosphere likely to be created, but discussion nonetheless.

Numerous matters were discussed at the CECC during its three days of meetings. The stated expectation of Canadian officials about extended

⁶² European Economic Problems. (Notes for Statement by Mr. Hees), 7 September, 1961. PAC RG 25 vol 3448 file 1-2-1961/1. Brief for Canadian Delegation to Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council, Accra, September 12-14, 1961.

⁶³ Ibid.

discussion of the EEC issue came to nought, largely through Canadian actions. Lloyd, the leader of the British delegation, reported:

...the whole day was spent on the Common Market. There was a full scale bombardment of the United Kingdom, the most energetic onslaught being from Fleming and a strong attack from [Australia's Harold] Holt. The Canadian theme was that our entry into the Common Market would be bad for the United Kingdom because we would lose more than we gained, disastrous for Canada because of lost export markets in the United Kingdom and harmful to the Commonwealth as a whole. Fleming accused us of throwing out of the window the undertakings we had given in the past. Everyone except the Malayans and West Indians was gloomy about our prospects of reaching an agreement with the Six which would preserve Commonwealth interests. There was considerable suspicion about the motives of the Six, fear of a supra-national body being set up and complete skepticism whether the Six would go any distance to meet the Commonwealth in their anxieties to preserve their present trade.⁶⁴

The British were clearly taken aback at the heat of the attack. Press accounts were replete with lurid descriptions of bitter disagreement. Rather than supporting the Canadian government's position, the press in Canada was extremely critical. Because of this, as the CECC meetings drew to a close, the Cabinet moderated its position and reluctantly accepted the British decision as a *fait accompli*.⁶⁵

Cabinet's decision to back down averted the possibility of a serious rift between the two governments. The final communiqué presented a unified front⁶⁶ and Canadian ministers publicly reiterated the position that the question of British membership in the EEC was entirely up to the British

⁶⁴Inward CRO telegram 1112 from Lloyd to Macmillan, 14 September, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3211. Meeting of the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Committee in Accra, September, 1961: Special Reference to United Kingdom Link with E.E.C.

⁶⁵PAC RG 2 vol 6121 Cabinet Conclusions, 14 September, 1961.

⁶⁶Meeting of Commonwealth Economic Consultative Committee, Accra, Ghana. Final Communiqué, 14 September, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3211.

government.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the controversy refused to die. In a complete role reversal, the Conservative government found itself accused by Liberal Member of Parliament Jack Pickersgill of being "consistently anti-British".⁶⁸ While Fleming denounced this in the House of Commons as "cheap politics",⁶⁹ shortly afterwards, Drew's absence from a meeting of high commissioners on 26 October fostered a rumour that it was a deliberate snub because of the British government's refusal to release the full text of Heath's 10 October speech to the EEC governments formally initiating the British approach to the Six. This set off a small media tempest, and despite a denial issued by Drew⁷⁰ on 12 November indicating that he simply had other commitments, contributed to the impression of an Anglo-Canadian split. Again, this caused unfavourable public comment in Canada much to the government's chagrin. Finally Diefenbaker undertook to tell Drew to moderate his opposition to British entry.⁷¹

Canadian behaviour was beginning to damage relations with Britain. When Fleming visited London in late November, the British government saw it primarily as an opportunity to "close the present unhappy chapter in Anglo-

⁶⁷ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (4th Session, 24th Parliament, vol VIII, 28 September, 1961). p. 9054.

⁶⁸ "Pickersgill Charges Tories Anti-British", Ottawa Journal. 28 September, 1961.

⁶⁹ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (4th Session, 24th Parliament, vol VIII, 28 September, 1961). p. 9055.

⁷⁰ Basil Robinson relates that this denial was prompted by instructions from Diefenbaker to do so and that its effectiveness was undermined by the fact that an official at the High Commission had already informed some journalists that a snub had been intended. See: Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. p. 216.

⁷¹ PAC RG 2 Cabinet Conclusions, vol 6122, 15 November, 1961.

Canadian relations⁷² brought about by their differences over British membership in the EEC. Of particular concern was what the British saw as the Canadian government's reluctance to allow its officials to take a constructive part in consultations on the issue.⁷³ Much to British officials' frustration, the instructions for Canadian officials for ten days of bilateral consultations following the CECC meeting had not allowed them to indicate any order of priority to the list of Canadian interests they wished British officials to safeguard.⁷⁴ The negative Canadian approach would not stop the British government from negotiating, but it might lead to a poorer result for Canada. To that point, it had not been essential for the British government to know which of the available alternative courses might be better for Canadian interests, but the need was bound to arise. Despite the Canadian government's decision to moderate its opposition to British entry, it had not become a constructive partner or moderated its insistence on political rather than official consultation.

When Fleming met with British ministers, his primary mission was to deliver a message from Diefenbaker indicating that he would like to visit in the coming January.⁷⁵ Canadian politicians evidently felt more secure handling consultations themselves than allowing their officials to act. He also reiterated the Canadian request to see the full text of Heath's speech.

⁷²Brief for meeting between the Prime Minister, the Commonwealth Secretary and the Canadian Finance Minister on Monday, November 20th, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3230. Prime Minister saw Mr. Fleming, Canadian Minister of Finance, 20 November, 1961: Note of meeting and Subsequent Papers.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴M/635/366 Pre-Negotiation Consultation with Canadian Officials. Final Meeting, 27 September, 1961. PRO FO 371/158330.

⁷⁵Note of Meeting between the Prime Minister, the Commonwealth Secretary and the Canadian Finance Minister, 20 November, 1961. PRO PREM 11/3230.

While this underlined the importance which the Canadian government attached to seeing this speech, Macmillan and Sandys again declined. The reason behind this refusal was not because the British government was ashamed of anything in it or afraid of Commonwealth reactions.⁷⁶ It was simply because the Commonwealth governments were not party to the negotiations. The British government wanted to establish the principle that it could exchange papers with the EEC without having to hand copies around to the Commonwealth, the EFTA, the Americans, or anyone else who thought they were affected.⁷⁷ As much as anything else, this would help establish the credibility of the British commitment to the EEC and try to emphasize that it was Britain which was joining, not all of its trading partners. This was not a reassuring sign to those in the Canadian government who feared a shift in British 'loyalty' away from the Commonwealth, but the British ministers tried to reassure Fleming that it was their policy not to join the EEC unless essential Commonwealth interests were protected. They reminded Fleming that any deal protecting the Commonwealth, British agriculture, and the EFTA was bound to be in Britain's best interest and however much the Canadian government might now disagree, it was Britain's interests which were primarily at stake. As for the Canadian fear that Britain's membership in the EEC would draw it away from the Commonwealth, especially because of the French attitude, the British position was that it was unlikely that anything supra-national or confederal would emerge and that the Commonwealth would benefit from having a member in such a powerful grouping.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Brief for meeting between the Prime Minister, the Commonwealth Secretary and the Canadian Finance Minister on Monday, November 20th, 1961.
PRO PREM 11/3230.

Neither side received what it most wanted out of Fleming's visit to London. Diefenbaker's marked preference for ministerial consultations remained, but Macmillan was unable to see him in January. Instead, Heath went to Ottawa on 4 January, 1962. He met Diefenbaker with only the British high commissioner, Amory, in attendance. Robinson, still the prime minister's DEA liaison officer, relates that Diefenbaker later told him that three main points emerged: that France's attitude was likely to be unfavourable to Commonwealth interests; that the United States favoured British entry as a means to end Commonwealth preferences; and that Diefenbaker had pressed for a meeting of Commonwealth prime ministers as the only way proper consultation could take place.⁷⁸ Heath visited Ottawa again in late March to discuss proposals for protecting Canadian trade interests and on the last day of that month, Macmillan proposed a full-scale CPMM to consider, among other things, Europe. Macmillan himself visited Ottawa at the end of April on the way back from a meeting with American President John Kennedy in Washington.

This ministerial consultation did not appreciably alter the positions of either side. Nothing had changed the British government's assessment of the situation which led it to initiate the process, and Diefenbaker continued to do as much as he could to stop it without actually having to try to use a veto he knew he did not have. In the text he approved for a speech to the Royal Commonwealth Society in Toronto on 30 March, before Macmillan's message about a CPMM arrived, Diefenbaker set out his views of the contemporary Commonwealth and where it was heading, its potential and its limitations. He did not directly condemn the possibility of British membership in the EEC, but it was easy to interpret his feelings on the subject. Among the material

⁷⁸Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. p. 241.

benefits from membership he listed, trade was the first - "an important and essential link in the bonds of the Commonwealth throughout its successive transformations."⁷⁹ While praising the Commonwealth's flexibility which enabled members to make alliances beyond its confines, he questioned:

Will this hold true if Britain in the sixties moves progressively into the European community sketched in the Treaty of Rome? How much of a strain will be placed on the Commonwealth association if the oldest and central member commits its primary allegiance to Europe and accepts the decisions of Europe's institutions of the future?⁸⁰

He acknowledged the right of any member to do as it chose, but reminded his audience of other members' reciprocal right to be consulted. Maintaining his position that consultation on this matter had to be political, he went on to demand a full CPMM before and commitment with regard to British entry.⁸¹

The ministerial and prime ministerial hard line was increasingly at odds with the advice offered by Canadian officials. The tenor of official thinking was reflected in an analysis of Britain and the Commonwealth prepared by Benjamin Rogers, the Canadian deputy-high commissioner in Britain in February, 1962. Unlike Drew, a career politician who frequently communicated directly with Diefenbaker, side-stepping the officials at DEA, Rogers was a career foreign service officer. His memorandum was distributed to all Canadian posts in Commonwealth and former Commonwealth (South Africa and Ireland) countries, as well as the former Canadian high commissioner in India, Escott Reid, by then ambassador to West Germany, and internally to

⁷⁹ Diefenbaker, John G., "The Meaning of Commonwealth. Notes Prepared for an Address to the Royal Commonwealth Society, Toronto, 30 March, 1962", Statements and Speeches 62/8. (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1962) p. 3.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 8.

⁸¹ Ibid.

other departments concerned with Commonwealth relations such as the Department of Finance.

The thrust of the analysis was that Britain's Commonwealth-oriented economic and political strategy since 1945 had, for the most part, failed. One of the results of this failure was that:

The seventeen years since World War II have been marked in Britain by recurring economic crises, by what appears to many people to be a reduction in the relative value to Britain of the Commonwealth trading system, and by growing disillusionment with the Commonwealth as a political system.⁸²

This disillusionment gathered force with Suez in 1956 and increased afterwards, especially after the forcing out of South Africa which destroyed the myth, still widely held in Britain at the time, of the Commonwealth as 'mother' Britain and dutiful children.⁸³ At the same time that Britain was experiencing recurrent economic crises and the Commonwealth proving less valuable, the EEC was becoming a success. All of this shifted the relative weight of arguments for and against British EEC membership, especially as they concerned the Commonwealth. British membership could not help but have some effect on the Commonwealth, but so too would a decision by Britain not to join for the sake of the Commonwealth. This would leave the Commonwealth open for blame whenever the British economy ran into difficulty. The implication of this was that since the Commonwealth could not provide an economic alternative to the EEC, Commonwealth interests were better served by not trying to block the British application.

⁸²Numbered Letter 234 from Rogers to Robertson, 2 February, 1962. PAC RG 19 vol 4923 file 8268-01. Miscellaneous Commonwealth Matters Generally (1957-1967).

⁸³Ibid.

Under the circumstances, effective action premised on ministers' public acknowledgments that Britain's EEC policy was a matter for Britain to decide combined with constructive efforts to protect Canadian interests as far as possible was the most prudent course of action. The fundamental difference between the government and its officials was this acceptance of the probable inevitability of British EEC membership by officials and the assessment that while Canadian interests would have to be protected as far as possible, on balance the Commonwealth could suffer more from taking being obstinate. Ministers' behaviour, from this perspective, did not advance either Canadian or Commonwealth interests. Despite the government's professed desire to protect Commonwealth interests, its inability to grasp the wider implications of policy bespoke a greater concern for narrowly defined short-term domestic interests. Behind the facade of protestations that it was a British matter, a facade constantly seen through in press reports, the government may have seen itself as fighting for Canadian jobs and exports, but it was winning itself no friends. Diefenbaker got his wish for a CPMM, this offered one more chance to act constructively if he was willing to take it.

The Denouement: The 1962 CPMM

The CPMM was to be held as usual in London, from 10 to 19 September. Unlike previous meetings, Diefenbaker took along the SSEA, as his ministerial companion. Green was a fellow Commonwealth devotee, but he had moderated his tone recently. He had headed the cabinet committee, which together with a committee of senior officials, headed by Bryce, prepared the Canadian policy positions and briefing material for the CPMM. These combined both ministerial apprehensions and official pragmatism. The basic Canadian position they recommended was that while Canadian and Commonwealth interests

did not at that juncture appear sufficiently protected, it was purely a British decision. The Canadian delegation should, therefore, voice its concerns, but it should not do anything which might leave it open to taking the blame should the British initiative fail.⁸⁴

Likewise, the Canadian briefs for the 1962 CPMM tried to offer a balanced appraisal of Britain's approach to the EEC. There would be undoubted political advantages for Canada if British membership strengthened the Western alliance and kept the new Europe more liberal in respect to ties with the Commonwealth and the United States.⁸⁵ There were dangers to the Commonwealth relationship, especially the danger of "some attenuation of the sense of cohesion in the Commonwealth and eventually a sapping of interest in maintaining the institution"⁸⁶ in Britain and in newer members should they see less advantage to the organization if economic benefits decreased. But, according to this more moderate Canadian view, gloomy predictions about the long-term future of the Commonwealth's future as an institution did not take into account the fact that the Commonwealth relationship had always been subject to modification. Whether or not Britain joined the EEC, other developments were reducing the capacity, never great, of members to act jointly. The growing membership presented a greater diversity of perspectives to accommodate on issues, and the growing radicalization of new members, as the South African issue had shown, was not always conducive to

⁸⁴PAC PRO RG 2, Cabinet Conclusions, 30 August, 31 August, and 5 September, 1961.

⁸⁵Memorandum: Some Possible Implications of British Membership in the EEC for Europe and the North Atlantic Alliance, 27 August, 1962. PAC RG 25 vol 3448 file 1-1962/1. Canadian Papers Prepared for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, London, September, 1962. Volume I.

⁸⁶Memorandum: British membership in the Common Market: Possible Implications for the Future of the Commonwealth, 31 August, 1962. PAC RG 25 vol 3448 file 1-1962/1.

compromise and dialogue. There was a wide range in the level of intimacy in Canada's relations with Commonwealth partners.⁸⁷ Regardless of a loosening of Commonwealth ties, Canada would probably remain close to Britain, Australia and New Zealand, and not as close to others such as Ghana. Any change from either membership growth or British EEC-entry would take place gradually over time and would not disrupt important relationships.

Diefenbaker, ready to make a last ditch defence of his Commonwealth, did not temper his views. Rather than converging with the developing consensus in Cabinet which now included Commonwealth stalwarts such as Green, Diefenbaker, always more inclined to take advice from those who agreed with him, once again began to sound like Drew. The high commissioner's opposition to British entry had never abated. On the eve of Macmillan's visit to Ottawa in April, he had sent Diefenbaker a telegram commenting alarmingly on the political implications of British membership in the EEC. He reiterated the old concern that it would weaken Britain's ties to the Commonwealth and make Canada more vulnerable to American control.⁸⁸ Indeed, Drew speculated that this was an American motive for supporting Britain's bid. Britain's entry into the EEC would be a turning point not only for the Commonwealth, but also for Canada. The obvious implication was that the bid must be stopped. Diefenbaker was very susceptible to this sort of reasoning and it showed in the lead-up to the CPMM. He was not looking for contingency plans to ease the transition or bargaining points to gain specific Canadian objectives. At the CPMM, he would be hoping to avoid British entry altogether.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Telegram 1588 from Drew to Diefenbaker, 29 April, 1962. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-7/414 vol 171 file 12447-40.

⁸⁹ PAC RG 2 Cabinet Conclusions, 30 August, 1962.

The more tempered view of Canadian officials and some ministers could not help but be conditioned by the fact that there were no desirable alternatives which Canada could offer. Canadian officials tried to find some and compiled a list of options for Britain besides the EEC and for Canada should Britain join the EEC. The options ranged from a Commonwealth free trade area, with or without Britain, to Canadian participation in a free trade area involving various combinations of the United States, the EEC, Japan, or Latin American.⁹⁰ None of these was attractive. Nor was the unlikely possibility that, if he sensed a shift in public opinion, Macmillan might 'seriously wish to discuss with Commonwealth prime ministers the question of ways and means of disengaging from the Brussels negotiations and the possibility of setting a different course of British policy.'⁹¹ Since a Commonwealth free trade area was out of the question, all Canada could do was offer support in seeking a broader international solution to the problems created by EEC tariff policy. This would entail a variety of measures aimed a freeing international trade generally. It amounted to little more than the traditional Canadian emphasis on the GATT with a greater flexibility on agricultural issues. Canadian officials knew that Canada had little new to offer.

Canada, at the time, was singularly ill placed to preach about the sanctity of Commonwealth economic relationships. Earlier that summer, shortly after the Canadian federal election in June reduced the government's huge majority to a tenuous minority, the Canadian dollar had experienced a severe crisis in international currency markets. Part of the government's

⁹⁰Memorandum: British Accession to the EEC - Alternative Groupings [n.d]. PAC RG 25 vol 3448 file 1-1962/1.

⁹¹Memorandum: British/EEC Negotiations: An Alternative to British Entry, 31 August, 1962. PAC RG 25 vol 3448 file 1-1962/1.

response to this had been to institute an import duty surcharge in order to reduce imports and improve Canada's balance of payments. Although Diefenbaker told the British high commissioner that he would have preferred to apply this only against imports from the United States, he regretfully had to apply it to British and Commonwealth imports as well.⁹² The increase in tariffs against British goods did not prevent the British government, notwithstanding its own balance of payments difficulties which were aggravated by its chronic trade imbalance with Canada, taking an important part in helping to support the Canadian dollar. It was something which British ministers hoped would gain Britain reciprocal consideration.⁹³ Macmillan wrote Diefenbaker a friendly note reminding him of this assistance,⁹⁴ but if he anticipated a more forthcoming attitude with respect to Britain's EEC application, he was to be disappointed. Despite having demonstrated in no uncertain terms the pre-eminence of national interests over Commonwealth considerations in his own policy, Diefenbaker expected that the British government give greater weight to Commonwealth interests than its own in its policy.

At the CPMM, Diefenbaker confidently predicted that the issue of British membership would all come to nought because of de Gaulle's opposition.⁹⁵ That belief, nevertheless, did not stop him from coming out strongly against British membership in the EEC. He was by no means alone in this. The

⁹² Inward CRO Telegram 605 from Lord Amory, British High Commissioner in Canada, 3 July, 1962. PRO PREM 11/3674. Prime Minister's Correspondence: Canada.

⁹³ Minute from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Prime Minister, 28 June, 1962. PRO PREM 11/3674.

⁹⁴ Macmillan to Diefenbaker, 3 July, 1962. PRO PREM 11/3674.

⁹⁵ John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: The Years of Achievement 1957-1962. p. 205. See also: Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. p. 281.

British government was taken aback by the strenuousness of the criticism it faced from other Commonwealth governments.⁹⁶ British ministers accepted that apprehensions about the economic effects were only natural but were surprised that their Commonwealth counterparts failed to appreciate the wider balance of advantages over disadvantages. While in some areas, especially temperate foodstuffs where there was nothing that could be done to protect Canadian interests, ministers felt that, despite Diefenbaker's vehement protestations, Canada "had, in reality, very little to fear."⁹⁷ In summarizing the meeting to his cabinet colleagues afterwards, Macmillan reported that

The most difficult problems had... been those of the older Commonwealth countries. Canada was not really concerned about her wheat exports, but had made the most of her other anxieties. The Australians had fought strenuously for their interests... New Zealand had taken a reasonably helpful line... The meeting had started badly, but had ended as well as could be expected.⁹⁸

The grave reservations of other Commonwealth members towards Britain's negotiations with the EEC were hinted at in description of the debate contained in the meeting's final communiqué. A weak effort by Diefenbaker to introduce the idea of alternative arrangements was not even mentioned - "politely ignored" Pearson disparaged it afterwards in the House of Commons.⁹⁹ The most important thing, however, from a British perspective, was that there was nothing in it to stop the negotiations from continuing.

⁹⁶C.C.(62)56(3). Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 18 September, 1962. PRO CAB 128. Cabinet Conclusions.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸C.C.(62)57(2) Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 20 September, 1962. PRO CAB 128.

⁹⁹Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (1st Session, 25th Parliament, 1 October, 1962) p. 62.

What did stop the progress of Britain's talks with the EEC was, as Diefenbaker had predicted, de Gaulle. In January, 1963, he effectively vetoed any move to allow Britain to join. Fortunately for Canada, after the government's covert and not-so-covert opposition to the idea, de Gaulle did not specifically cite the Commonwealth, although the Commonwealth was a part of the non-European political and economic orientation to which the general objected. Shortly afterwards, in April, 1963, Rogers reported from Canada House that Lloyd, no longer Chancellor of the Exchequer, called in a speech for the creation of a Commonwealth Economic Development Council.¹⁰⁰ Its purpose would be to examine the obstacles to expanding Commonwealth trade and development. Rogers enquired about the speech at the CRO and officials there agreed that it appeared to be an attempt to salvage a Commonwealth initiative from the collapse of the EEC talks. Lloyd was not alone in considering a Commonwealth alternative, but Macmillan had no intention of pursuing the subject - had ever been any real prospect for success, it would have already been tried.¹⁰¹ Diefenbaker, evidently not having learned from his efforts in 1957-8, recorded in his memoirs that had he continued as prime minister, he too would have "launched a major initiative on Commonwealth and international economic questions".¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰Numbered Letter 506 from Rogers to Robertson, 4 April, 1963. PAC RG 19 vol 4923 file 8267-01. Commonwealth Trade Generally (1957-1968).

¹⁰¹See: Harold Macmillan, At the End of the Day: 1961-1963. (London: Macmillan, 1973) pp.374-6.

¹⁰²Diefenbaker, One Canada: The Years of Achievement. p. 206. He claims these plans were already worked out, but it seems unlikely that he was referring to anything more than the programme prepared for the September, 1962 meeting in London. Certainly the briefs prepared for Pearson's May, 1963 trip to London do not indicate that there was a well developed programme to offer the British government.

In an completely unrelated series of events, the Diefenbaker government was defeated in the House of Commons in February, 1963. In the election that followed, the Progressive Conservative minority government was replaced by a Liberal one. Lester Pearson was sworn in as Canada's prime minister on 22 April, 1963. Even before this, preparations were underway for a visit to London to repair the damaged Anglo-Canadian relationship. These preparations, however, were not made on the basis that a Commonwealth trade initiative would either be suggested by the British government or a productive route for Canada. Indeed, the basic assumption was that despite the EEC set-back, the British government had not turned its back on Europe. While there was no immediate prospect for re-opening talks with the EEC, membership looked to be the long-term policy, at least of the Conservative Party.¹⁰³ Quite the opposite of seeking a Commonwealth solution to its economic problems, the British government strengthened the EFTA by accelerating tariff removal.

For its part, the new Canadian government, anxious to retain what benefit there still were from Commonwealth preferences for as long as possible, was equally determined not to let them stand in the way of full Canadian participation in the "Kennedy Round" of GATT talks. Canada derived some economic benefits from the Commonwealth relationship, but the most important Canadian trade interests lay elsewhere. Distinguishing what were Canada's most important interests in both trade and Commonwealth relations would enable the government to pursue both more effectively.

¹⁰³ Memorandum: Developments in International Trading Relations, 22 April, 1963. PAC RG 25 vol 3500 file 19-1-BA-BRIT-1963/2. Visit of Prime Minister Pearson to London, May 1-4, 1963. Prime Minister's Briefing Papers: Trade and Economic Questions.

Significantly, Pearson's visit repaired a valued bilateral relationship rather than Canada's Commonwealth relationship. Had Mackenzie King, or even St. Laurent alienated the British government to the extent Diefenbaker finally managed, it would have been widely perceived in Canada, not least by Conservatives, as a diminution of Commonwealth ties. This was a testament to the Commonwealth's changing character and Britain's changing role in it. The Diefenbaker government had not started out opposing British policy towards Europe, but when this policy began to threaten the vision of the Commonwealth held by some of its members, Diefenbaker took the lead in defending it. For all his constructive role in facilitating the evolution of the 'third Commonwealth', in some areas, Diefenbaker and his government had not yet fully adjusted to this new Commonwealth and yearned for the old. The failure of Diefenbaker's own Commonwealth trade initiative should have demonstrated to his government the limitations of the Commonwealth's economic dimensions. That Diefenbaker was never alone in his quixotic effort to preserve them, showed that trade ties with Britain retained political or economic salience to other members as well. Nevertheless, Diefenbaker was mistaken in acting as if he were making a stand in favour of Commonwealth unity at a turning point in Commonwealth history. The British application to the EEC was no more a turning point in Commonwealth history than was Suez. Indeed, like Suez, it was more of a milestone showing how far Commonwealth developments had gone and in what direction.

Maintaining closer economic ties may well have engendered the more cohesive Commonwealth of Diefenbaker's rhetoric. The turning point, however, would have had to be one in the opposite direction: a dramatic move towards Commonwealth economic ties. Diefenbaker had rejected what could have been used as such a turning point with the British free trade offer in 1957 and

failed to produce one himself with any bold initiatives at the 1958 CTEC. Such developments would have run counter to post-war Commonwealth and international political and economic trends. They had been rejected at the time precisely because they had not appeared to be productive. If there was a turning point involved in Britain's application to the EEC, it would have been for the Diefenbaker government to accept the end of serious prospects for Britain and the Commonwealth to provide Canada with an economic counterweight to the United States; although this too should have been evident by then.

Adjusting to Britain's new more European orientation should have been like shedding an old skin. The centrality of economic ties with Britain harkened back to the first Commonwealth. Although it coexisted easily with second, it produced periodic confusion, whether from Britain trying to read too much in and get too much out of Commonwealth leadership, or Diefenbaker trying to resurrect a spent purpose for the Commonwealth. As British reports on future policy observed, the Commonwealth's economic dimension facilitated British leadership, and it was the possible loss of this leadership for the Commonwealth which sparked fears for the organization's survival. However, it was only a particular Commonwealth which was really threatened. The most important Commonwealth in Canadian policy remained the 'bridge' and Canada's relations across it need not have been threatened by British trading arrangements. Canadian governments, Diefenbaker's included, had already shown themselves adept at meeting the needs of 'bridgemanship'. This was the leadership that the Commonwealth required, not the confused, misplaced obstructionism which Diefenbaker showed over the Europe.

CHAPTER 7 - NEW INSTITUTIONS FOR A NEW COMMONWEALTH

The winds of change in the Commonwealth continued unabated through 1964 and 1965. They laid the third Commonwealth's imprint over those of the first two, erasing much of what went before that was not in accordance with its direction. The Commonwealth was in the final transformation to an organization almost exclusively concerned with what would later be called the North-South dialogue. The changes being wrought on Commonwealth structure and purpose showed in the outcomes of a series of institutional proposals put forward by various members in 1964 and 1965, of which the proposal for a secretariat was the most dramatic. Canadian policy adapted to new circumstances

British Proposals: 1964 - Staying at the Centre of the Commonwealth

The idea of Britain regrouping around the Commonwealth following the thwarted attempt to join the EEC did not sway the government, but it resonated powerfully with some parliamentarians. Lloyd was not alone in advocating a Commonwealth Economic Development Council. The same pressures which in 1957 required Macmillan to actively demonstrate a commitment to the Commonwealth played upon his successor Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the former Lord Home, who assumed the premiership in October, 1963. In February, 1964, during a parliamentary debate on Commonwealth relations, Douglas-Home expressed his willingness to consider a Commonwealth Economic Development Council with a secretariat in the unlikely event that other Commonwealth members agreed to the idea.¹ Such an ambitious proposal was not, however,

¹Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. vol 688, cols 1360-1.

included in initiatives which Douglas-Home advanced prior to the July, 1964, CPMM.

In two messages to the prime ministers of the 'old' Commonwealth, in June, 1964, Douglas-Home suggested five Commonwealth initiatives. Their ostensible purpose was "to develop the association on 'a genuinely more cooperative means' and give it 'new vitality, meaning and purpose'"² by making it more attractive to the newer members. Thus the initiatives included a proposal for a new series of collaborative Commonwealth development projects in the areas of technical assistance, education and training, some possibly of regional rather than national benefit. While many of these projects would be extended on a bilateral basis rather than by two or more Commonwealth countries, the British prime minister suggested that they be presented as examples of Commonwealth cooperation and called Commonwealth projects. He also envisaged creating new administrative machinery to initiate projects.³

Other ideas to improve educational and training opportunities for those in new Commonwealth countries included a suggestion that other Commonwealth members follow a planned British announcement of a capital aid programme for higher education to complement the Commonwealth scholarships programme. In another proposal, Douglas-Home suggested expanding training and research facilities in public administration. The British government was considering establishing a specialized institute attached to a British university to train senior and middle-level administrators, university teachers and

²Memorandum B3: British Prime Minister's June 3 Proposals, 3 July, 1964. PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1. Canadian Papers Prepared for Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1964.

³Ibid.

researchers from Commonwealth countries. A fourth proposal suggested creating regional organizations for technical advice modelled on the Middle East Development Division attached to the British embassy in Beirut. Finally, the British prime minister proposed endowing a foundation to strengthen the Commonwealth in unofficial fields. It would do this by promoting collaboration between professional organizations, increase visits between national bodies, and encourage the formation of Commonwealth organizations. Like the British proposals on the teaching of English put to the 1958 CTEC, it would encourage popular support for the Commonwealth connection.

The Canadian government's response to these proposals was guarded. Most were already part of Canadian aid programmes. Canada could, therefore, with few changes to existing plans, participate, although the government would insist, as it had always done, that any Canadian segments of joint projects be clearly identified as such. Problems arose, however, since many of the existing Canadian programmes were not specifically Commonwealth-oriented and the government wished to create more balance between attention specifically directed at the Commonwealth - which accounted for the bulk of Canadian bilateral aid⁴ - and that for French speaking countries. This was particularly important because the government was in the process of expanding Canadian links with French speaking developing countries in an effort to better reflect Canada's bilingual character in its foreign policy. Canada's bilateral relations with developing countries had hitherto been almost entirely accounted for by its Commonwealth links. The nascent desire to broaden the basis of Canadian 'bridgemanship' did not threaten to undermine

⁴The exact allocation of Canadian bilateral aid was: Commonwealth countries 82%, francophone countries 6% and all others 12%. Memorandum B7: Canadian External Aid - General. PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1.

the basis of Canada's Commonwealth involvement, but it did present the possibility that in the future the Commonwealth's pre-eminence in this area might be challenged.

There were also other sources of Canadian hesitation about the British proposals. The government was concerned that spending, either in a capital aid programme for universities, or by a foundation, would be disproportionately directed towards British goods, services and organizations.⁵ As for creating new institutional mechanisms to administer new programmes, the Canadian government considered that much of the work could be done by existing bodies, especially the CELU. In the case of the proposal for regional advisory groups, Canadian officials believed that in most cases a narrow Commonwealth context would not be the most efficient means of regional planning. There was, then, no predisposition to create new institutions or seek specifically Commonwealth solutions for the sake of increasing perceptions of Commonwealth unity or utility if doing so was not the most efficient means of delivering development assistance.

The suspicion of British motives in the Canadian analysis of Commonwealth initiatives was not restricted to grand proposals such as Douglas-Home's. It also manifested itself with respect to proposals for developing the Commonwealth Defence Science Organization. This body replaced the former Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Defence Science in 1962. The British representative, Sir Harold Zuckerman, was trying to "give some teeth to the organization [and] proposed such steps as the creation of a central

⁵Memorandum B3: British Prime Minister's June 3 Proposals, 3 July, 1964.
PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1.

Secretariat in London.⁶ While the Canadian government favoured, in principle, Commonwealth cooperation in this field, Canada's close relations with the United States imposed limitations on how much information the Canadian government could share with Commonwealth countries especially the newer ones. Canadian enthusiasm for the British scheme was also tempered by Canada's limited defence science resources and the desire not to spread them too thinly. There was also "some suspicion that the British scheme for a central secretariat [was] designed to promote continuing interest in the purchase of British defence equipment."⁷ The Canadian government, therefore, preferred to emphasize bilateral exchanges with Commonwealth partners old and new.

The Canadian government could hardly criticize the British government for seeming to want to use the Commonwealth to encourage markets for British goods. After all, one of the reasons for resisting proposals which enshrined programmes in Commonwealth initiatives was that they might prevent Canadian aid contributions from being spent on Canadian goods and services.⁸ The Canadian government shared the British government's objective of keeping the Commonwealth together by binding the new members more closely to it. Where the two differed was that the British government had the pressure of history to demonstrate leadership. British proposals to make the Commonwealth more useful for its members would invariably have, or be interpreted as having, the additional role of demonstrating British leadership. When the Canadian assessment ranked the latter as being more prominent than the former in a

⁶Memorandum B6: Commonwealth Defence Science Organization, 12 June, 1964. PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Memorandum B3: British Prime Minister's June 3 Proposals, 3 July, 1964. PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1.

British initiative the danger that Britain might try to 'mis-use' the Commonwealth as a prop for Britain's world position dampened Canadian enthusiasm for the details of a proposal even if Canada sympathized with its stated objective.

Canadian Preparations for the 1964 Meeting

Canada was increasingly asserting a leadership role in the Commonwealth. Canadian policy had always done what it could to shape the Commonwealth in accordance with Canadian interests. Canadian governments, however, required less of the Commonwealth than did Britain and did not have to contend with other members trying to move out from under Canadian dominance. Shorn of Diefenbaker's visions of the Commonwealth as an economic counterweight to the United States, the most important Canadian interest continued to be preserving and developing it as an instrument for managing relations with the developing world. It provided

a network of "special" contacts with the newly-emerging nations in Asia and Africa at a time when the crude East-West conflict centred in Europe [was] being transformed into a contest with international communism for the ideological allegiance of these new nations.

Other Western countries, especially France, were attempting to develop analogous links. France had been slower than Britain to offer independence to its colonial empire, especially in Africa, but it had quickly caught up and surpassed Britain in the early 1960s. The French government, however, tended to retain more formal residual ties in the form of defence and economic treaties than did the British. The Canadian government was aware firsthand, thanks to its Commonwealth connections, that this 'tied'

⁹Memorandum B2: The Changing Commonwealth, 17 June, 1964. PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1.

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⁹Memorandum B2: The Changing Commonwealth, 17 June, 1964. PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1.

concluded that continuing with an independent and strictly bilateral Canadian aid programme would have a sizable impact on recipients and produce benefits for Canada even without a more organized scheme.¹⁵ There was, therefore, little interest within the Canadian government for the idea, although there was a willingness to reconsider the idea if it would help promote regional cooperation and countries in the region requested it. The Canadian government was not seeking ways to institutionalize the Commonwealth merely for the sake of doing so.

A field in which the Canadian government considered that it could take a meaningful initiative to help the newer members, was satellite communications. Because of its own communications needs deriving from having a small population spread thinly over a vast area, Canada was only slightly behind the superpowers in developing satellite communications technology. A Commonwealth telecommunications conference held in London in the spring of 1962 had discussed satellite communications, but the conflicting objectives of Britain and the other participants stood in the way of progress.¹⁶ At the 1964 meeting, Pearson came prepared with an offer of Canadian technical assistance and training to help other members make use of the new technology.¹⁷

¹⁵Memorandum B8a: Colombo Plan for the Commonwealth Caribbean, 30 June, 1964. PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1.

¹⁶Memorandum: Satellite Communications, 31 August, 1962. PAC RG 25 file 1-1962/1. Canadian Papers Prepared for Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, London, September, 1962. Volume II.

¹⁷Memorandum: Satellite Communications, 8 June, 1965. PAC vol 3451 file 1-1965/1. Canadian Papers Prepared for Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, June, 1965.

Development assistance was not, however, the main issue on the minds of the representatives from the newer Commonwealth countries who assembled in London when the meeting began on 8 July, 1964. As in 1960 and 1961, the major topic, at the insistence of African members,¹⁸ was to be racism in Southern Africa. The issue this time was Southern Rhodesia and the white minority government there. The Canadian government anticipated that, as in the case of South Africa, this would be the focus of a potentially divisive debate. African members wanted the British government to force, militarily if necessary, Rhodesia's government to accept majority rule. The British government, reluctant even to discuss the matter in detail, was not prepared to do this. The Canadian government hoped for a positive compromise statement supporting the African position, but not giving the Rhodesian government or its supporters grounds to claim interference in Rhodesia's internal affairs; this might even offer aid to help Rhodesia take its place as an independent Commonwealth member.¹⁹ Pearson, therefore, came with what the Canadian government hoped would provide a satisfactory compromise outcome. This took the form of a declaration on racial equality similar to statements made at the 1961 conference.²⁰ As the Canadians had foreseen, the debate was intense. "The Canadian delegation actively tried to use its

¹⁸Despite Paul Martin's recollection that Douglas-Home requested the conference to deal with this issue [Paul Martin, A Very Public Life. Volume II: So Many Worlds. (Toronto: Deneau, 1985) p. 413] most other accounts relate that African delegations insisted Rhodesia be given prominence. Garner implies that they almost hijacked the meeting [Joe Garner, The Commonwealth Office 1925-68. (London: Heinemann, 1978) p. 350] while Arnold Smith states that Canadian pressure at the meeting of officials beforehand was instrumental in ensuring it a more prominent place on the agenda. [Arnold Smith with Clyde Sanger, Stitches in Time: The Commonwealth in World Politics. (Don Mills, Ontario: General, 1981) p. 11.]

¹⁹Memorandum B14: Southern Rhodesia, 26 June, 1964. PAC RG 25 vol 3449 file 1-1964/1.

²⁰Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (2nd Session, 26th Parliament, Volume VI, 17 July, 1964) p. 5604.

influence to prevent disintegration,"²¹ by letting the African members know that Canada was on their side and working towards a compromise since there was no chance that the British government would accede to their demands. This compromise took the form of a statement in the final communiqué²² almost identical to the declaration which Pearson had come with for this purpose.²³

The Canadian proposal did not deflect all of the heat directed at the British government by African members. Subsequent events showed that this meeting was only the beginning of rancour over Rhodesia. However, it was illustrative of the nature of Canadian leadership within the Commonwealth. It was a different variety of leadership than the British government tried to exercise, less proprietorial and more consensual. The British government, as it had done on a regular basis since 1944, produced a series of proposals and took them as far as it was able. The Canadian government, notwithstanding Diefenbaker's efforts to re-invigorate the Commonwealth's economic aspects, although generous in terms of aid proposals, was generally satisfied to let the Commonwealth develop as the majority wished and exercised its leadership to allow this to happen within the bounds of practicality and efficiency.

²¹ Lester Pearson, (edited by John A. Munro and Alex I. Inglis), Mike. The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson. Volume 3 1957-1968. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1975) p. 283.

²² "Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 1964 (London, 8-15 July). Final Communiqué", The Commonwealth at the Summit. p. 83.

²³ The text of the original Canadian declaration is reproduced in: Smith, Stitches in Time. p. 11.

The 1964 Secretariat Proposal

Nowhere was the Canadian preference for leading where others wanted to follow more evident than regarding the proposal to establish a Commonwealth secretariat. The idea, introduced at the 1964 CPMM by Ghana's Nkrumah took the Canadian government by surprise, as it did other Commonwealth members.²⁴ It quickly gained support from other leaders from the newer members, especially the Africans. The desire to increase the flow of development assistance had always prompted newer members to press for greater institutionalization. This had been the case at the 1949 finance ministers meeting, where Pakistan had circulated its memorandum on aid and in 1957 and 1958 when Malaya and Ghana supported a Commonwealth development institution. Nkrumah's idea was first introduced in terms of facilitating economic development but other Commonwealth leaders added their own twists. Milton Obote, Uganda's prime minister, referred specifically to a Commonwealth secretariat and Dr. Eric Williams, the prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, formally proposed its establishment.²⁵ Other ideas included dispute settlement machinery and a development fund. There was no focus to the many

²⁴ Pearson, speaking in the House of Commons afterwards [Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (17 July, 1964) p. 5607] and Smith [Stitches in Time. p. 4] both make this clear. Garner [The Commonwealth Office. p. 351] states that earlier that year, he and Sandys, on a visit to Ottawa, discussed a multilateral secretariat with Pearson and received assurances that Canada would not oppose the idea were it thought of general value by the membership. Whether this was in conjunction with parts of Douglas-Home's proposals, most of which required additional administrative machinery or the discussions about a Commonwealth economic development council, is unclear, but the Canadian receptiveness to the machinery envisaged in these was unenthusiastic. However, the Canadian government did not consider the idea serious enough even to prepare a precautionary memorandum in preparation for the meeting as was the usual practice. If Pearson did offer any such assurances, they were personal and he had to overcome resistance from his cabinet to offer support at the meeting. [See below]

²⁵ Smith, Stitches in Time. p. 5.

ideas brought forward, but it was clear that the newer members supported the general idea that the Commonwealth required new and more formal institutional machinery at the service of the Commonwealth as a whole. There was a certain amount of implied criticism of the CRO and the British government in this,²⁶ but also the positive sign that the Commonwealth's newer members were taking more interest in preserving and developing the Commonwealth.

By the meeting's midpoint, the older members had yet to recover from their initial surprise and state their own positions. For Pearson and the Canadian government, supporting the idea of a permanent central secretariat required a major adjustment in attitudes. Arnold Smith, who was to become the first Secretary-General, has given the most complete and detailed account of the 1964 discussions on the subject and the Canadian response. He makes it clear that Pearson had to overcome strong cabinet resistance to the idea, especially from Paul Martin, the SSEA, who recorded only that "many in the cabinet were doubtful about giving the secretariat the functions of a development bank."²⁷

The traditional Canadian suspicion that Commonwealth centralization equalled British dominance still existed. For Pearson, it was significant that the pressure for the new institution came from the newer, more

²⁶Unequal treatment of members or a perception that the British government 'stage managed' meetings is often cited in explaining new members' support for a secretariat to organize meetings. See: Smith, Stitches in Time. p. 6; Kenneth Robinson, "The Intergovernmental Machinery of Commonwealth Consultation and Co-operation," in WB Hamilton, Kenneth Robinson and CDW Goodman (eds), A Decade of the Commonwealth, 1955-1964. (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1966) p. 123; Peter Lyon, "The Commonwealth Secretariat and Organization" in Peter G Taylor (ed) A Survey of International Institutions. (London: NAGLO, 1982) p. 81; and Andrestinos N Papadopoulos, Multilateral Diplomacy within the Commonwealth: A Decade of Expansion. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982) p. 29.

²⁷Martin, A Very Public Life. Volume II. p. 413.

nationalistic members, who were, he felt, even more likely to reject domination by Britain than older members such as Canada.²⁸ The new members who supported the establishment of a secretariat clearly felt that the continued administration of many Commonwealth affairs by the CRO was a greater neocolonial threat than the new body. That being the case, if convinced of the idea's practical value, Canada would not oppose it. Indeed, to do so would place Canada in the role of opposing the active desires of the constituency whose goodwill Canada's Commonwealth involvement was most intended to cultivate. The Canadian government's approach to the idea of a secretariat was still cautious and it would not countenance creating a new institution for no other purpose than having one. On the other hand, Canada was now committed to supporting the creation of a useful secretariat that could fulfill its role without derogating from existing methods of consultation.²⁹

A critical factor was the terms of reference under which a new secretariat would operate. The plethora of ideas proposed by the various leaders gave very little clear idea as to what exactly a new body would end up doing. Officials from the delegations met to discuss the various ideas and submitted a report to the prime ministers. Among other things, it recommended having another committee of officials consider the issue further and report back at a later date. The prime ministers accepted the need for further study but went further than this. In the past, putting a proposal aside for further study could be a formula for killing the idea, as happened with the development agency and bank. In this case, not only was the study mentioned in the final communiqué, but the prime ministers accepted the idea

²⁸Canada. Parliament. House of Commons Debates. (17 July, 1964) p. 5607.

²⁹Ibid.

in principle immediately.³⁰ In this, the previously unimaginable proposal that the Commonwealth have a secretariat received much more positive backing than did other ideas for developing the organization such as Douglas-Home's five proposals and Pearson's offer of assistance in satellite communications which received much more tentative wording in the final communiqué.

Canadian Policy Towards a Secretariat

True to form, once the Canadian government sensed which way the wind was blowing the Commonwealth, it did its best to see that it was not dragged off course or allowed to drift onto one inimicable to Canadian views. The secretariat was still far from a reality; the differences between members as to its final form and function were substantial. There quickly emerged a division between those favouring an active role for the new secretariat and those preferring a more modest frame of reference. As had now become commonplace, Canada sided with the main tendency among the newer members. The division between old and new was not as otherwise clear-cut as it had been over Suez, South Africa or Rhodesia. India sided with Australia and Britain in advocating a strictly limited secretariat.

Although Canada sided openly with the forces of change, a Canadian background paper circulated during the preparations for the officials' meeting was far from radical. Being on the side of change, the Canadian government was well positioned to ensure that it was not extreme and this was reflected in the Canadian paper. Even its 'radical' departure, a suggestion that the Secretary-General organize meetings of Commonwealth representatives,

³⁰"Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 1964 (London, 8-15 July). Final Communiqué", The Commonwealth at the Summit. p. 90.

possibly high commissioners, to discuss papers on political and economic subjects as a means to further understanding among Commonwealth members, had antecedents in war-time and post-war meetings of Commonwealth high commissioners in London under the tutelage of the Commonwealth Secretary. The British government, however, adamantly opposed this, as it did other Canadian ideas such as having the new, untried secretariat assimilate existing institutional bodies in London and giving it a role in co-ordinating or providing technical assistance.³¹

The British government prepared its own working paper on the secretariat proposal. It did not oppose the idea of a secretariat, indeed, having one could help to distance Britain from the Commonwealth in the eyes its erstwhile European partners. The British government, however, envisaged a more limited role for the new body and a more cautious approach to its development. The secretariat's first priority, in this view, should be to get itself organized and only after that should it consider taking on wider responsibilities.³² When the Commonwealth officials studying the matter met in London in January, 1965, a compromise between the two positions resulted. The report, for the most part adopted unchanged at the 1965 CPMM, set out general principles for the operation of the new secretariat. Its main function, in addition to servicing future Commonwealth meetings, was to be information dissemination to members on matters of mutual concern, including the circulation of unbiased papers prepared on its own initiative or by member governments. The report stressed that the new body would in no way impinge on the sovereignty of members and not "arrogate to itself executive

³¹Smith, Stitches in Time. p. 12-13.

³²Garner, The Commonwealth Office. p. 352.

functions."³³ But other than these basic limitations, there were few restrictions placed on how it developed and fulfilled its main functions. The future relationship of other Commonwealth bodies to the new central organ was left to a future evaluation. The secretariat was not immediately given a wide range of specific duties, but neither was it severely restricted from the start. On balance, the more liberal approach championed by the Canadian government won the day.

The Canadian government was not especially concerned about the absence of particular details from its preliminary paper in the final report. The most important aspects of the basic framework established at the January meeting of officials as far as the Canadian government was concerned were the absence of both wide-ranging restrictions on the secretariat and wide-ranging powers for the secretariat. In the Canadian government's view, the secretariat should be established on the basis that it could "evolve empirically and in the light of experience."³⁴ The plan for the secretariat did not involve any acceptance of future commitments so it was quite safe to let the secretariat start its job and see where it went. There was, then, no need to begin with a comprehensive 'grand design' and large establishment. This being the case, the general guidelines contained in the report of the officials were quite compatible with the Canadian government's views.

There was, in fact, a great deal of continuity with past Canadian policy towards the creation of new Commonwealth institutions in the Canadian

³³Agreed Memorandum on the Commonwealth Secretariat. Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 1965 (London, 17-25 June). Final Communiqué. The Commonwealth at the Summit. p.106.

³⁴Commonwealth Secretariat: Draft Canadian Statement, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

attitude towards the secretariat, excepting, of course, the grand discontinuity of accepting it in the first place. As set out in the report of the January meeting, the secretariat would have no powers or functions which in anyway could diminish the authority or sovereignty of members. True to Canadian policy throughout the history of the Commonwealth, there would be no possibility of using the new institution to introduce voting, resolutions, or any other means of imposing group policy. In the past, when agreeing to establish Commonwealth organs, the Canadian government had always ensured that this did not entail the delegation of specific responsibilities by members. The Commonwealth relationship had always been strictly consultative. The Canadian government could not have accepted anything that tried to change this,³⁵ nor did it have to with the secretariat.

Rather than fearing domination from the new body, the Canadian government saw more danger in trying to restrict its activities. For the new institution to develop in accordance with the wishes of most Commonwealth members, the basic provisions of the secretariat could not hamper or otherwise restrict its natural growth and evolution. The Canadian government believed that much of the secretariat's future success would depend on the first secretary-general and the other senior staff.³⁶ Placing too many restrictions on the secretariat at the beginning might discourage suitable candidates³⁷ from accepting the position.³⁸ The secretariat, then, would be

³⁵Commonwealth Secretariat: Talking Points, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

³⁶Commonwealth Secretariat: Draft Canadian Statement, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

³⁷The 'right man' was key to the Canadian government's faith in a benign evolution of the secretariat and to this end it waged a discrete campaign for the selection of Arnold Smith as the first secretary-general. See: Smith, Stitches in Time. pp. 16-17.

doomed from the outset, with serious consequences for the Commonwealth and Canadian policy objectives.

Many of the newer members expected that tangible benefits would flow from the creation of the secretariat. Were it to fail to deliver these for reasons attributable to obstacles placed in its way by the older members, some of the newer members - precisely the constituency which the Canadian government wished to influence - might become disillusioned with the Commonwealth.³⁸ The attachment to the Commonwealth of many of the newer members was already secondary to regional loyalties (such as through the Organization of African Unity, established in 1963) and the balance of benefits accruing to them via the Commonwealth was subject to change. Already, the trade benefits which they derived from the Commonwealth relationship were being eroded. Future developments of the GATT would inevitably reduce this further, to say nothing of the uncertainties around what might happen if Britain were to join the EEC at some later date. This last was less of an immediate possibility following the election of a Labour government in Britain in October, 1964, but could have similar effects as the GATT for members not covered by special EEC arrangements. A possible threat to the Commonwealth's long-term survival was a growing movement towards dealing with development assistance on a world-wide basis. For the Commonwealth to continue to function as an effective mechanism for the Canadian government to manage its relations with the developing world, it had to come up with new means of maintaining the interests of its newer members and an unhobbled secretariat offered a promising means to this.

³⁸Commonwealth Secretariat: Draft Canadian Statement, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

³⁹Commonwealth Secretariat: Talking Points, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

Allowed to operate without undue hindrance, the secretariat could provide a valuable link between the increasingly diverse members of the Commonwealth. Since its commencement, the Cold War had figured prominently in Canadian calculations as to the Commonwealth's utility. The fundamentally nationalist struggle against Western domination on the part of elements within the societies of colonial dependencies was susceptible to being equated with the ideological struggle between Eastern communism and Western capitalism. This created the danger that the inevitable urge to assert independence could be subverted into hostility towards the West in general. If newer members of the Commonwealth felt that they would be better served by a body other than one belonging to the bureaucracy of their former colonial master, then it was better to create a body more likely to engender a sense of inclusiveness. It was the only viable response to the forces at work within the world, "negative and divisive, which seek to set race against race, region against region, the developing against the industrialized, the newly independent against the older independent."⁴⁰

The Canadian government recognized that most of the newer members of the Commonwealth, especially the most recent additions, had only limited resources, at best, to enable them to keep up to date on a wide range of international issues and, at any rate, were more pre-occupied with domestic or regional concerns. The new secretariat could provide them with a more balanced view of international problems than they might otherwise receive.⁴¹ The presentation of a balanced appraisal of issues was one of the few strictures on the secretariat's activities contained in the officials'

⁴⁰Commonwealth Secretariat: Draft Canadian Statement, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁴¹Commonwealth Secretariat: Talking Points, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

report. Notwithstanding past efforts at providing what would certainly be claimed as a balanced presentation of views by CRO officials, the new institution would be less open to suspicion of bias, especially over the looming controversy of Rhodesia. The secretariat, then, was the best means of keeping the peace within the Commonwealth, thereby keeping it together. It was in the interest of Canada to do so; it was in the interest of the newer members to do so; and it was in the interest of Britain and the other older members to do so. In short, it was in the entire Commonwealth's interest to proceed with the loosely delineated secretariat.

Overcoming the Last Obstacles

Despite basic agreement from all members on the contents of the January report, the issue of the secretariat was still not settled by the next CPMM in mid-June, 1965. The main cause of the delay in accepting the report was resistance towards it from Australia's Menzies.⁴² In one of the great ironies of Commonwealth history, after years of Canadian opposition to Australian proposals for creating central Commonwealth institutions, when the time came to create a Commonwealth secretariat, the Canadian prime minister had to actively try to neutralize the objections of his Australian counterpart to ensure the effort's success. The dramatic role reversal of Mackenzie King's and Curtin's successors was indicative of how much the Commonwealth had changed over the years.

⁴²Commonwealth Secretariat: Memorandum, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

The Australian prime minister had held serious reservations about the secretariat proposal from the outset. This fact was generally known and was reflected in the attitude of Australian officials at the January meeting.⁴³ Despite being uncomfortable with the initiative, Menzies had not actively tried to obstruct its progress or otherwise prevent the emergence of consensus. The depth of his opposition to the plan only became evident in early April, 1965, when he sent a letter to the new British prime minister, Harold Wilson, detailing his concerns. In this letter, Menzies reiterated his longstanding support for the principle of establishing a central Commonwealth secretariat, but expressed grave reservations about the plans for one as they then stood. Such an undertaking, he averred, required a detailed examination of the proposed secretariat's functions and the nature and authority of its staff.⁴⁴ The implication clearly being that the current proposal had not received adequate consideration. Oddly enough, considering the terms of the January report, Menzies stated his broad concern that in the Australian government:

we do not wish the Secretariat to have any executive authority which could cut across or diminish the authority which Prime Ministers and their Governments have in, and in relation to, their own country and national policies. There is we fear, some disposition to equate the position of the proposed Secretary-General (which seems a somewhat inflated title) with that of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We would regard this as dangerous. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has in the course of time, and with the acquiescence of the General Assembly, gathered to himself a species of authority, and a quasi-diplomatic staff responsible to and directed by him, which if it developed in

⁴³ It is often mentioned in accounts of the secretariat's creation, but not in detail. Smith comes closest to disclosing Menzies' vehemence. See for example: M. Margaret Ball, The 'Open' Commonwealth. (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1971) p. 88; Garner, The Commonwealth Office. p. 352; Richard H. Leach, "The Secretariat", International Journal. (26:2, Spring 1971) p. 377; and Smith, Stitches in Time. p. 15;

⁴⁴ Annex: Text of Menzies' Message to Wilson of 3 April, 1965. Commonwealth Secretariat: Memorandum, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

the Commonwealth, could drastically change the nature of our association and lead to the exacerbation of differences. It still remains the essence of the Commonwealth relationship that we are autonomous and equal and remain the masters of our own houses.⁴⁵

The report did not re-assure him on this count. Its lack of clearly elucidated parameters, and especially limitations, for the secretariat left him apprehensive about how it would develop. At the 1964 CPMM, he had envisaged the prime function of a secretariat being limited to the dissemination of factual information on matters of common concern to members. This would allow prime ministers to better prepare themselves for issues which would arise at meetings rather than having issues sprung upon them by others at the meeting itself. Menzies' preference was for the secretariat to have little scope for activity beyond this.

Fundamentally, Menzies was still unreconciled to the outcome of the debate over whether to have an active secretariat or a more limited, passive secretariat. The discretion allowed the secretariat by the report as then drafted was still a critical issue for the Australian prime minister. So too was a provision enabling the secretariat to offer expert and advisory opinions on development problems. In Menzies' opinion, any institution charged with being expert and advisory on the many and varied development problems faced by countries in the Commonwealth would have to be more elaborate even than the body being recommended to Commonwealth governments which he saw as already far too large.⁴⁶ He wanted a smaller, more strictly defined organ, the functions of which could be expanded if experience demonstrated a need.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

Menzies only communicated his worries to Wilson. The British government, however, very quickly passed the message on to the prime ministers of Canada and New Zealand, the other two remaining members of the 'first' Commonwealth. The Canadian government had never expected the Australian prime minister to be enthusiastic about the secretariat, but was surprised at the tone of the message to Wilson.⁴⁷ Since CPMMs had no voting procedure, any decision on the secretariat would need, at the very least, the acquiescence of every member. This made it important to soften Menzies' position. In a development unthinkable in Mackenzie King's time, the Canadian government, as the old Commonwealth member most supportive of the secretariat proposal, now found itself taking a prominent role in dealing with the problem of how to get the Australian government to take a more flexible approach to the issue. There was, as usual, to be a meeting of officials immediately prior to the CPMM in June. The Canadian government hoped at the very least to get Australian agreement to consider the January report there to see how their concerns might be addressed.

The Canadians saw the Australian fears as "far-fetched."⁴⁸ The United Nations analogy in particular seemed impossible to sustain. The accretion of authority to the United Nations Secretary-General arose from the inability of United Nations organs to perform their functions effectively because of Cold War deadlock. Since the Commonwealth had no organs to which members had delegated the type of authority which bodies such as the Security Council

⁴⁷ Commonwealth Secretariat: Talking points, 3 May, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3452 file 1-1-1965/3. Papers Prepared for Discussions with British Ministers, May 10, 1965.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

wielded, there was no danger of a Commonwealth secretariat following suit.⁴⁹

In giving themselves over to such fantastic anxieties, the Canadian government felt that the Australians had

given no consideration to the positive features of the proposal and that they have thought insufficiently about the hazards to the Commonwealth of establishing a Secretariat which would fail to meet the legitimate aspirations of the newer members.⁵⁰

Canadian officials could only conclude that Menzies harboured the notion that control of the proposed secretariat could somehow be "captured by radical, probably African, elements which would ultimately impose policies on member governments."⁵¹

Overcoming Menzies' strong objections was one of the subjects discussed when Martin, the SSEA, visited London for talks with British ministers on 10 May, 1965. At that stage, the Commonwealth's older members were trying to resolve the matter among themselves, but Canadian officials were worried that it would be difficult to keep the vehemence of Australian objections suppressed much longer.⁵² If the efforts of the older members could not remove the Australian objections, the other members of the Commonwealth would have to informed, at least in general terms, of the negative Australian response. The Canadian government, supporting the secretariat as a means to strengthen Commonwealth bonds did not want the issue to become a source of

⁴⁹Commonwealth Secretariat: Talking Points, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁵⁰Commonwealth Secretariat: Talking points, 3 May, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3452 file 1-1-1965/3.

⁵¹Commonwealth Secretariat: Memorandum, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁵²Commonwealth Secretariat: Talking points, 3 May, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3452 file 1-1-1965/3.

division, especially if it might amount to a rebuff of new members' efforts to create a stake in the organization for themselves. The most productive route to follow in trying to resolve this problem, the Canadians felt, would be a direct approach to the Australians by the British. This seemed more likely to be productive than either an initiative from themselves or the New Zealanders; although the Canadians were willing to follow-up a British approach. These efforts, while unsuccessful in completely eliminating Menzies' anxieties, assuaged them sufficiently to enable the proposal to proceed.

The Australian government was not the only potential source of disruption for the planned secretariat. The Canadian government also believed that some officials at the CRO, although not the minister, opposed the plans as well.⁵³ Like Menzies, they were believed to be dissatisfied with the latitude accorded the new body for future development and would have preferred firmer restrictions on its powers and functions.⁵⁴ The reason for this suspected reluctance to see the January report implemented was concern over the new British government's planned merger of the CRO with the Foreign Office. With this prospect, these officials did not want to see the CRO's functions diminished or assumed by the secretariat. Canadian officials' assessment of the problems this would present was that CRO officials could hardly openly adopt the position attributed to them and so were unlikely to

⁵³Garner insists that far from seeking to limit the secretariat, it was in the CRO's interest to be relieved of the "invidious task" of organizing Commonwealth meetings. However, he also makes clear the preference for a "cautious and pragmatic line" in determining the secretariat's scope. See: Garner, The Commonwealth Relations Office. pp. 351-2.

⁵⁴Commonwealth Secretariat: Memorandum, 7 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

do more than "unobtrusively support the Australian position."⁵⁵ The key, then, remained overcoming the Australian objections.

British Proposals 1965: Labour's Programme

The establishment of the new secretariat was not the only proposal for expanding the range of Commonwealth co-operation and institutions anticipated at the 1965 CPMM. There were a veritable host of other initiatives. Some had been put over for additional study at the 1964 meeting, but there were numerous others which were coming forth for the first time, or at least, given the tendency of such proposals to emerge and re-emerge, were resurfacing in time for the 1965 meeting. The most far-reaching of these emanated from the new British government.

The British Labour Party, while in opposition, had made much of the Conservative government's alleged neglect and disregard for the Commonwealth. Labour's election manifesto in the October, 1964, castigated the Conservatives for allowing the Commonwealth's share of British trade drop by a third and bringing the organization near to disintegration through its negotiations with the EEC. The 1964 CPMM, Labour claimed, had shown the Commonwealth to be strong despite the actions of their Conservative opponents but lacking a coherent policy at its centre. Labour proposed to provide this by promoting closer consultation, possibly via the creation of a Commonwealth Consultative Assembly, and initiating a new drive to promote Commonwealth trade.⁵⁶ Canadian officials monitored political developments in Britain

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Extracts from "Let's Go With Labour - The New Britain" (The Labour Party Manifesto for the General Election, 1964). PAC RG 19 vol 4923 file 8267-01. Commonwealth Trade Generally.

closely. After Labour's victory, they felt that with this election platform and Wilson's past record of speeches in the House of Commons criticizing the government on Commonwealth trade, the matter would loom large in the new government's objectives for the next CPMM.⁵⁷

These expectations that a Commonwealth initiative would be forthcoming from Labour were at least partly substantiated in a 13 April message from Wilson to Pearson about the agenda for the June meeting. In it Wilson included the comment:

I have felt for some time that Commonwealth understanding could be enhanced by developing inter-parliamentary consultations which would draw Commonwealth Parliamentarians closer together and encourage them to gain an understanding of each other's problems and thus help to promote the Commonwealth concept. Useful ideas for Commonwealth co-operation might well be generated this way.⁵⁸

In the past, such an idea would have triggered alarm bells in Ottawa. It still did among some Canadians and parts of the Liberal press still denounced the idea as "a back door through which the concept of a consolidated group of nations could be reintroduced after many failures."⁵⁹ Within the government, however, the idea was so implausible that it provoked more mystification than outrage.

When Martin was in London in May, he queried the new Commonwealth Secretary, Arthur Bottomley, as to what exactly the proposal for parliamentary links meant. The closest parallel which existed was the

⁵⁷Numbered Letter 295 From the Office of the Canadian High Commissioner in London to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 12 February, 1965. PAC RG 19 vol 4923 file 8267-01.

⁵⁸Quoted in Memorandum: Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly, 4 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁵⁹"The Old Dream", Winnipeg Free Press. 19 April, 1965

Council of Europe and the Canadian government failed to see how a Commonwealth body could in any way be compared to that body.⁶⁰ The Commonwealth already had CPMMs to exchange views at the highest level and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to provide personal exchanges among parliamentarians. There were no any indications of public support anywhere in the Commonwealth for a move towards political unity of any sort. Indeed, within Canada, even Diefenbaker publicly rejected the idea.⁶¹

Bottomley confirmed that the basic notion was analogous to the Council of Europe. The proposal's purpose was to give Commonwealth parliamentarians an opportunity to come together and give parliamentary examination to problems of mutual interest. It would have no executive power or authority and would fundamentally be a forum for the exchange of ideas. The Canadian government, however, remained unconvinced as to either the idea's utility or its practicality. The proposal, so long as it remained confined to the outline given by British ministers did not differ substantially from the objectives and benefits of the existing Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. There seemed, then, no need to recreate an existing body and it was deemed undesirable to create a new one which would go any further. It was difficult for Canadian officials to believe that many of the newer Commonwealth members would have any enthusiasm for a centralizing institution bearing any resemblance to the Council of Europe.⁶² That body had received its impetus from a strong movement within many European countries towards

⁶⁰Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly: Talking Points, 4 May, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1-1965/3.

⁶¹"Commonwealth Group Not Feasible: Ex-PM", The Toronto Globe and Mail. 24 April, 1965.

⁶²Memorandum: Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly, 4 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

greater political unity. The exact opposite trend had been a conspicuous feature of the Commonwealth throughout its history. But while this trend had been fostered by previous Canadian governments, the first critical criterion for acceptance or rejection of this proposal with centralizing implications was no longer its implications for Canadian sovereignty and independence, rather it was the acceptability of such a proposal to the Commonwealth's newer members. The outcome was identical to what it would have been in the first Commonwealth, but its reasoning now reflected the third Commonwealth.

This determination to stick to the needs and operation of the third Commonwealth also manifested itself in the Canadian attitude towards the anticipated British trade initiative. Unlike other issues on the meeting's agenda, the Canadian government had not received any indication as to what proposals the British government might present and so could only prepare a general response. In reviewing the possibilities, Canadian officials found it difficult to imagine any Commonwealth trade initiatives which would confer substantial benefit on any member other than Britain. They anticipated that a British initiative put forward in the context of a strengthening of Commonwealth ties would almost certainly be directed toward one or more of the following objectives:

strengthening the position of sterling, arresting the decline in Britain's share of intra- Commonwealth trade, expanding British exports to particular markets such as Canada's or, as a gesture to the majority of members, proposing special Commonwealth arrangements to assist less developed countries.⁶³

If the British aim was to secure support for sterling they would probably revive the suggestion that Commonwealth countries, Canada as well as members

⁶³Memorandum: Commonwealth Trade, 11 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

of the Sterling Area, hold additional sterling in their national reserves. This idea was associated with Thomas Balogh who was now an advisor to Wilson. The Canadian government had resisted the idea in the past and did not anticipate that it would find any favour with other members either.

The probable asymmetry of benefits of any British trade proposal made it less likely that there would be general agreement to them. There remained the problem that "such initiatives could be presented in a way which would have considerable public appeal and be embarrassing for Canada."⁶⁴ The Canadian government had no desire to be depicted as an obstacle to Commonwealth cooperation, even if the sort of cooperation envisaged belonged more to the first Commonwealth than the third. The Liberal government was in a minority situation with Diefenbaker sitting across the House of Commons waiting for ammunition to use against the government. While determined to resist any attempt by Wilson to in effect revive an aspect of the first Commonwealth, the Canadian government could take solace from the fact that privately, British officials had indicated that the British prime minister faced a situation much like that of Canadian Conservatives in 1957. There was a general desire within the Labour government to see Commonwealth trade expanded, but there was a dearth of concrete ideas as to how it would be accomplished.⁶⁵ Such were the difficulties in trying to make the unworkable work. If there was anything which typified Canadian governments' approach to developing the Commonwealth, it was to go with what would work. Diefenbaker had neglected this to his peril, but Pearson was intent on holding the line.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Other Proposals

Of the many other proposals likely to be dealt with at the 1965 CPMM, the two most significant were anticipated suggestions for the establishment of a Commonwealth court and the previous year's British proposal for a Commonwealth Foundation. As with most suggestions for Commonwealth institutions, neither of these was entirely novel or ground breaking. At one time, the countries which comprised the Commonwealth did have what amounted to a Commonwealth court in the guise of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Over time its jurisdiction had gradually diminished as independent members abolished appeals to the British body in favour of establishing their own supreme courts as the final arbiter of cases within their countries. Proposals to replace the Privy Council with an Imperial or Commonwealth court started as far back as the 1911 Imperial Conference. The Canadians and South Africans invariably opposed such moves and a functioning body was never established.

More recently, the past dozen years had seen several suggestions for means to either replace the Privy Council or make its continued use more attractive.⁶⁶ The last was in 1960 from the Ceylonese Minister of Justice, Edmund Cooray. With his country poised to become a republic, he suggested that a Commonwealth Court could provide a means for countries wishing to maintain judicial links.⁶⁷ At the 1960 CPMM, Diefenbaker, citing Canada's

⁶⁶A variety of official and semi-official proposals are in: PRO DO 35/5430 Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the possible setting up of a Commonwealth Court (1953-60) [file CON 379/3]

⁶⁷Edmund Cooray, "Note on the Proposal for a Commonwealth Court", nd [May 1960?]. PRO DO 35/5430.

abolition of appeals to the Privy Council in 1949 (which he had opposed at the time), refused to subordinate Canada's Supreme Court to any new body. Other objections, such as the danger that institutionalization would reduce the spirit of frank discussion within the Commonwealth, and even that it would overlap with the Privy Council's functions, led Macmillan, when summing up the discussion as chairman, to recommend that it would be better not even to study the idea or mention it in the final communiqué.⁶⁸

Canadian officials anticipated that support for a Commonwealth court proposal would come from two sources. In Britain, a small group of Conservative backbenchers were urging such a move. More importantly, however, the government of Malaysia (as Malaya came to be called with the addition of Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah in 1963) had supported the 1960 proposal and still favoured the establishment of some form of regional Commonwealth court. Before the 1965 meeting, Canadian officials lacked precise details as to what the Malaysians might suggest, but they considered two possibilities as most likely.⁶⁹ These were for a body dealing with private-law disputes to replace the Privy Council or for one dealing with disputes between Commonwealth members.

The Canadian government sympathized with the objectives underlying such proposals, especially with the need to preserve common legal traditions among members. There were, however, important implications for Canada, the Commonwealth, and relations between Commonwealth members which made the Canadian government extremely reluctant to agree even to a regional court.

⁶⁸ Memorandum: Commonwealth Court, 9 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

It was no more willing to resubordinate Canada's Supreme Court to any other judicial body than in 1960,⁷⁰ and did not want to see the precedent established of any Commonwealth country's supreme court being superceded.⁷¹ Moreover, the Canadian government was not convinced of the need for additional machinery of this kind for settling intergovernmental disputes. There was a danger that it might duplicate or weaken the International Court of Justice.⁷² The pre-eminent Canadian commitment remained, as ever, to wider multilateral institutions. The court could, however, in addition to undermining these, damage the image of the Commonwealth if, once established, it were not used. In that event, it could further weaken the image of international arbitration generally.

A regional court of any sort would still be a Commonwealth institution and create a precedent for the future evolution of the Commonwealth. The fact of creating a regional court could create the impression within Commonwealth countries, including Canada, that this route was taken because of opposition from certain countries to a universal Commonwealth court. The Canadian government feared that "pressure might thus be brought to bear on Canada to participate if such a court were to exist."⁷³ In sum, the Canadian objections to any such proposal harkened back, as did indeed the idea itself, to the first Commonwealth. The Canadian government was resolute

⁷⁰Commonwealth Court: Talking Points, 9 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁷¹Commonwealth Court: Supplementary Talking Points, 10 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁷²Commonwealth Court: Memorandum, 9 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁷³Supplementary Memorandum: Commonwealth Court, 10 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

in its defence of the third Commonwealth as the most effective one for Canadian policy.

The proposal for a Commonwealth Foundation had much less sinister implications. The 1964 CPMM had set out the scope of the body for further study. The January meeting of officials concluded that there was a genuine need to better develop non-governmental interchanges like those envisioned in the British proposal. The idea behind the Commonwealth Foundation, to broaden the basis of personal and professional contacts within the Commonwealth, was not ground breaking by any means. A variety of Commonwealth non-governmental organizations, especially professional or trade groups existed, and the Commonwealth Institute, with a largely complementary mandate to encourage understanding about the Commonwealth and other members, although active almost exclusively in Britain, provided an example of an institution funded by subscription by Commonwealth governments, but not itself an intergovernmental organization.

The Canadian approach to the Foundation proposal was that if the preponderant majority of Commonwealth members favoured its establishment, Canada would also contribute to its financing.⁷⁴ Using the CELU budget sharing arrangement as a model, Canada was prepared to cover twenty percent of the costs, Britain having offered to pay half of the £250,000 planned initial budget. An important consideration in the Canadian decision was the reaction of Canadian professional organizations and other groups such as the Canadian Labour Congress. When asked if they were willing to participate, most of the organizations canvassed showed an active interest. Satisfied

⁷⁴Memorandum: Commonwealth Foundation, 9 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

that there was a domestic constituency willing to make use of the government's investment, the government would proceed. The Canadian government did not appear as vigorous in pursuing the British initiative on the Commonwealth Foundation as it did with the African one for the secretariat. All in all, the attitude was reminiscent to that of the early 1950s when in an effort not to disrupt a growing cohesiveness which Canada wanted to foster, the Canadian government went along with some proposals it might not otherwise have supported.

Just as it was prepared to accept proposals so as not to strike a disharmonious chord, the Canadian government also held back on initiating one in an area where it was beginning to develop reservations. The Canadian government had consistently supported Commonwealth membership for any former British dependency desiring to join. In the 1960 CSG, Bryce, the Canadian representative had insisted on this. There had, nevertheless, always been the implied reservation on the Canadian position that cases should be considered individually, whether Ceylon in 1947, Ghana in 1957 or Cyprus in 1960. By 1965, the pace of independence, and, pursuant to the policy articulated in the 1960 report, Commonwealth membership, had accelerated beyond anything envisioned in 1960. Cyprus was followed by even smaller states such as Malta and the brief membership of an independent Zanzibar in 1964. The near future, held the prospect of additional small members from the Caribbean region and Africa starting with the Gambia in 1965. The Canadian government had held doubts about approving the membership of very small members in the past, but had not expressed them to other members.⁷⁵ With the faster pace of independence, Canadian officials felt that the

⁷⁵Membership in the Commonwealth of Remaining British Dependencies: Talking Points, 3 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

Commonwealth would face problems they had not sufficiently considered in 1960.

The 'open door' membership policy which Canada had always supported had resulted in a broadly based international association which provided an effective instrument for maintaining relations between European, Asian, African and Caribbean cultures. This was the Commonwealth's primary function now as far as Canada was concerned, but officials were concerned that in 1960, the numbers involved were not fully anticipated. Instead, they felt, the 1960 exercise placed too much emphasis on the importance of providing guidance to newly independent countries and not enough on how the Commonwealth might usefully accommodate the then unforeseen profusion of members.⁷⁶ Although Canadian officials had themselves used the idea of guidance in 1960 to counter British arguments in favour of restricting membership, they did not hold by it now. A diluted, less cohesive, Commonwealth might be less able to provide the guidance anticipated in 1960, if there was even any point in pretending that this function had any real substance. The prime ministers of the smallest members such as Cyprus and Zanzibar which possessed the most limited government resources and thus might be said to be most in need of guidance did not use the contacts available through the Commonwealth to seek it.⁷⁷ For these reasons, Pearson, in a message to Wilson on 25 March, 1965, queried whether it might not be

⁷⁶Memorandum: Membership in the Commonwealth of Remaining British Dependencies, 3 May, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1-1965/3.

⁷⁷Membership in the Commonwealth of Remaining British Dependencies: Talking Points, 3 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

appropriate to re-open the question of membership of smaller states at the approaching CPMM.⁷⁸

The British prime minister, while sympathetic to the Canadian concerns, counselled against pursuing them. In his response to Pearson's letter, Wilson raised the issue, stressed in the 1960 report, that it would be paradoxical were the Commonwealth more restrictive than the United Nations.⁷⁹ He conceded that there were strong arguments against membership regardless of size, particularly the possibility that the consequence would be to make it "impossible to maintain the essential value of the Commonwealth association."⁸⁰ The British government had held these reservations, not only in 1960, but in earlier considerations of membership. On these occasions, Canadian governments had supported open membership so as to facilitate the Commonwealth's function as an instrument to promote dialogue between the West and developing countries. At the time, the Commonwealth's most probable alternative function was use as an instrument to promote British influence. The likelihood of this was now fast receding, if not long gone. Now, the point having been ensured, the Canadian government was considering the possibility that:

The effectiveness of the Commonwealth as an institution for communication between continents, races, ideologies and religions, between the industrialized and the underdeveloped... [was] not necessarily served by the principle of universality. A relatively limited group of relatively large countries may provide more

⁷⁸Note: Membership in the Commonwealth of Remaining British Dependencies, 3 May, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1-1965/3.

⁷⁹Membership in the Commonwealth of Remaining British Dependencies: Talking Points, 3 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

⁸⁰Ibid.

effectively for the kind of political interchange which, in our view [was] the main value of the Prime Minister's meetings.⁸¹

The Canadian government was not dissatisfied with the Commonwealth as it had developed after 1960, but the value of additional inexperienced interlocutors from economically and politically weak, even non-viable, states, diminished as their numbers grew.

The political interchange which the Canadian government saw as the main value of CPMMs was becoming ever more important as developing countries in and out of the Commonwealth assumed greater importance in international politics. It had always been important in a Cold War context where, since the mid-1950s, competition for the allegiance of developing countries had increasingly served as the principal battleground of East-West rivalry. To this was now added the developing tendency among new states to take advantage of their growing numbers to exert collective pressure to shape the international agenda in accordance with their needs. The 1955 Bandung Conference and its successor, the 1961 Belgrade Conference had focused on non-alignment, but Belgrade also served as the point of departure for a growing movement to assert collective economic interests. From March to June, 1964, 120 states had assembled in Geneva for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Two thirds of them were from the developing world. Even though such states were still unable to wield much economic influence, their ability to shape the international political agenda, especially within multilateral institutions, appeared to be growing. Commonwealth leaders, especially Nehru (before his death in 1964) and Nkrumah, had played central roles in these international developments. The Commonwealth provided the Canadian government with a unique mechanism to

⁸¹Ibid.

engage key leaders from developing countries in a more intimate dialogue than was possible at the United Nations. The leaders of very small states were much less valuable as interlocutors in this regard.

The Canadian concerns about the membership of small states were not simply a matter of the Commonwealth's use to Canada, but also its use to the new members. Canadian officials felt that some smaller states might more usefully be served with alternatives to full membership.⁸² This, they felt, could take a form such as Samoa's treaty arrangement with New Zealand or partial membership allowing them to receive benefits from some Commonwealth institutions such as aid programmes and the scholarship plan. The examples of Cyprus's self-imposed delayed membership, Zanzibar's short-lived membership, and Samoa's alternative to membership demonstrated that new states wanted to choose for themselves how they would be associated with the Commonwealth. The Canadian government, whatever its reservations, was not about to deny them this.

Membership structure was not a high priority issue for the Canadian government. Officials did not even prepare a formal memorandum in preparation for the June meetings. The Canadian government had no intention of pressing the matter without general support. Should the opportunity arise, Pearson would have done no more than suggest that the topic of the future of small territories be referred to another study group of officials.⁸³ Such a group would be more anonymous than raising the issue before the assembled prime ministers and the Canadian government had no

⁸²Memorandum: Membership in the Commonwealth of Remaining British Dependencies, 3 May, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1-1965/3.

⁸³Membership in the Commonwealth of Remaining British Dependencies: Talking Points, 3 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/1.

intention of alienating members from developing countries. The issue did, however, suggest that the Canadian government was taking the use and development of the Commonwealth very seriously. Now that the long-term economic future of Britain appeared to be with Europe, notwithstanding whatever surprises Wilson might have, and old-style Commonwealth unity advocates such as Menzies were showing signs of disenchantment with the idea, the possibility that the modalities of the first Commonwealth could be resurrected was receding. Like the Canadian government's acceptance of a secretariat, this appearance of a changed Canadian attitude towards the Commonwealth was more apparent than real. Both, together with the policy towards other institutional proposals, pointed to a desire to refine the Commonwealth so as to be better able to exploit the full potential of the contacts it afforded with the third Commonwealth. This was now firmly established as the only viable function for the Commonwealth in Canadian policy and in the policies of other members, regardless of any ideas they might have had to the contrary.

The 1965 CPMM: Outcomes

The future of dependencies was discussed at the 1965 CPMM, but not in a way conducive to raising the issue of small states. The burning membership question at the 1965 meeting was again Rhodesia. Nevertheless, the meeting still found time to deal with the many proposals for Commonwealth institutional development. Officials meeting beforehand reviewed the January report on the secretariat bearing in mind that governments were already on record as agreeing in principle to the new body and only seeking to finalize

details for the prime ministers' approval.⁸⁴ The report they submitted did not differ substantially from the January report.

Nothing had happened to substantially change Menzies' view either. He was still unhappy about the potential for the secretariat to grow in size and scope. Stating his position for the record, but not as a veto, he warned that "

if the Secretariat sought to invade the field of policy and executive action or trespass on the rights of individual governments, it would do great harm to the Commonwealth.⁸⁵

Pearson spoke next and just as the Canadian government's championing of the secretariat had precluded any possibility that anything invidious was ever seriously entertained, he neutralized Menzies arguments by agreeing with him. True to the Commonwealth tradition of seeking out areas of agreement despite any differences, the Canadian prime minister was quick to support Menzies' point about the undesirability of the secretariat acting as Menzies feared, but pointed out the limitations placed on the scope and function of the secretariat would prevent this from coming to pass. At the same time, Pearson argued, the secretariat had to have the opportunity to grow as changing circumstances required. The prime ministers were not going to adopt anything to which any of their members disagreed and Menzies, whatever residual doubts he harboured, did not object further. The meeting approved the report of officials subject only to consideration of procedures for

⁸⁴P.P.M(65)4 Commonwealth Secretariat: Report by Officials, 16 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/3. Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, June 1965. Minutes and Memoranda.

⁸⁵P.M.M(65) 6th Meeting. Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 1965. Minutes of the Sixth Meeting, 18 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/3.

circulating reports on dependent territories.⁸⁶ Five days later, the Canadian effort on behalf of the new Commonwealth Secretariat was crowned by the selection of Arnold Smith as the first Secretary-General.⁸⁷

The next day, the second last before the meetings wrapped up, Wilson made his anticipated economic initiative. Being confronted with a disturbing reduction in Britain's share of Commonwealth trade, Wilson explained, led the British government to thinking that the Commonwealth as a whole should consider how to expand mutual trade. Assuming they would all contribute to the GATT talks, the question as to how specifically Commonwealth trade might be increased remained. He offered some suggestions for consideration. The first possibility was to use government purchasing for national development plans. As an example, Wilson cited the Province of Saskatchewan's preference for British goods in recognition of the amount of Saskatchewan wheat sold to Britain. The British government thought other governments should give consideration as to how similar provisions could be built into their development programmes. Wilson's second idea was to expand the use of commodity agreements in which Commonwealth members would agree to buy or supply set amounts of commodities at agreed prices. This idea was reflected in one of three main British proposals for action. Wilson suggested that national planning authorities from around the Commonwealth meet so as to compare plans in order to take one another's plans into account. The other two proposals included a revival of the old canard of holding a meeting of Commonwealth trade ministers and, in an obvious attempt to generate orders for the British aeronautics industry, a proposal to reactivate the

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ P.M.M(65)11th Meeting. Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 1965. Minutes of the Eleventh Meeting, 23 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/3.

Commonwealth Air Transport Council which had fallen into disuse so that aircraft manufacturers could take into account other Commonwealth countries' requirements before developing new aircraft.⁸⁸

Other leaders had their own ideas for developing closer economic ties. One of these was put to the meeting as a formal proposal. President Ayub Khan of Pakistan suggested that members share research results in specific areas. But when Pearson spoke to the issue at the next session, by which time the Canadian delegation had had time to quickly examine the morning's events, he took aim specifically at the British proposals. He noted that in Canada many development projects were under provincial jurisdiction so the federal government could not interfere by committing itself to the kind of coordination proposed. He also warned that by seeking to increase Commonwealth trade, members must not do anything to prejudice world trade in general, especially the efforts of GATT and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Pearson conceded that:

It might be useful to have meetings of Commonwealth countries at United Nations conferences; possibly this would help to stop such conferences hardening the divisions between the developed and the developing countries.⁸⁹

In so doing, he left no doubt as to what Canada saw as the Commonwealth's main purpose. If others were intent on reviving the trade aspect, however, he made it clear that it could not be a one way street. Canada had a net

⁸⁸P.M.M.(65) 12th Meeting. Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. Minutes of the Twelfth Meeting, 24 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/3.

⁸⁹P.M.M.(65)13th Meeting. Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. Minutes of the Thirteenth Meeting, 24 June, 1965. PAC RG 25 vol 3451 file 1-1965/3.

trade balance in its favour with the Commonwealth as a whole and would welcome more Commonwealth trade aimed at changing trade balances both with countries enjoying favourable balance with Canada and those like Britain with unfavourable balances with Canada.

Increased trade with Commonwealth countries would be a welcome help to reduce Canadian dependence on the United States. Accomplishing this objective was the difficult part, as Diefenbaker had learned. Pearson acknowledged, rather generously, that past trade ministers' meetings had proven useful, but he felt it would best not to hold such a meeting immediately following the finance ministers' annual September meeting to give time for preparatory work by officials. Likewise reviving the CATC was a good idea, as far as routes and information concerning aircraft were concerned, and Pearson said he would gladly consider ways Canadian airlines and manufacturers could cooperate. In sum, without directly saying no to anything, Pearson had done his best to ensure Wilson's proposals gained no momentum.

The final outcome of the economic proposals was much in line with Pearson's views. The CATC proposal went nowhere. With respect to the economic planners' meeting, institutional differences among members posed difficulties but the governments would do what they could. They felt that a trade ministers' meeting needed more preparations and directed officials and the new Secretariat to work on it. Likewise, Khan's suggestion was also referred to the Secretariat. The Secretariat was already demonstrating its usefulness in promoting Commonwealth cooperation. Nothing was rejected, but this attempt at reviving old-style Commonwealth relationships was turned back with the help of the new.

Most of the other proposals for developing the Commonwealth relationship fared no better than Wilson's economic initiatives. As Canadian officials had surmised, the British proposal for a Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly met a quick end, without, in fact, Pearson having to say anything. All of the delegates speaking to the issue, representing the first, second and third Commonwealth,

took the view that such an institution would be incompatible with the nature of the Commonwealth and would only be justified if there were the intention of proceeding to form a Commonwealth government. It would in any event be unwise to seek to establish too many Commonwealth institutions at the present time...⁹⁰

Instead, the prime ministers agreed that the more limited objectives appropriate to the Commonwealth would be best carried out by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Similarly, the meeting quickly disposed of the Malaysian government's proposal for a Commonwealth court. Not having an existing organization which it could be claimed would achieve the same objectives other than the British Privy Council itself, the meeting turned the issue back to the Malaysian government to raise at the forthcoming Conference of Government Law Officers in Canberra, Australia. The prime minister thus avoided totally rejecting the idea at the political level in preference for a rejection later when dealt with at a technical level. The Commonwealth Foundation met much less resistance. The Kenyan delegation said that it was not authorized to commit its government to participate. The rest, therefore, agreed to establish the Commonwealth Foundation with the understanding that Kenya would not participate.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

The assembled Commonwealth leaders had made a clear statement of the sorts of institutions possible in the new Commonwealth and the sort of relationship they implied. Efforts to promote cooperation among the independent members, especially involving a transfer of resources from the richer to the poorer were acceptable. Anything remotely suggesting greater political or economic unity was not. Important trading relationships still existed within the Commonwealth, but the organization's real economic focus was development. As for the Commonwealth's political basis, it was and would remain cooperation and discussion without commitment beyond that. Far from indicating a new desire for unity among members, the establishment of the Commonwealth Secretariat marked another step away from Britain's preponderant place at the centre of the Commonwealth which had always posed a latent threat of dominating any focus of unity. As Commonwealth members had shown in previous instances such as the resolution of the South African membership issue, the determination of membership structure in general and the gradual winnowing out of policy areas managed via the Commonwealth, only by drawing apart could the basis of continuing cooperation in other areas be laid. The rejection of any institutions which would have actually given effect to unity demonstrated clearly the desire to maintain the Commonwealth as a forum for sharing viewpoints, not shared viewpoints. The Pearson government subscribed to this view as had the Diefenbaker, St. Laurent and Mackenzie King governments before it.

For the Canadian government, the developments of 1964 and 1965 meshed well with what had been the Commonwealth's most important function in Canadian policy since the independence of the Indian sub-continent. The Commonwealth had shed many roles since the 1940s and the Canadian government's positions at the 1965 CPMM showed that it would accept neither

backsliding into old roles like trade and the general bolstering of Britain, nor accretion of new areas of activity such as the proposals for a court entailed. The only possible role for the third Commonwealth, the Canadian government recognized, was as a bridge between the West and the developing countries. The formation of the Secretariat secured the bridge without compromising the traditional Canadian stance on the nature of Commonwealth consultation and cooperation. It was the culmination of a progression of aid initiatives and political efforts to diffuse divisive issues and prevent splits on the basis of colour since the 1940s. A once unthinkable mechanism became thinkable in a Commonwealth no longer susceptible to British control and needing ways of engaging the interests of an expanding membership.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

A Canadian brief on the Commonwealth's future prepared for the 1957 CPMM dismissed Commonwealth economic integration as unfeasible and observed:

Nor is it to be anticipated that the Commonwealth will develop constitutionally in the sense of the introduction of more organized political relationships such as a council or a secretariat.¹

Yet within the next eight years, one Canadian prime minister had declared his intention to attempt the first, and another had agreed to the second. Even more remarkably, each had done so while maintaining a basically consistent view of the Commonwealth's role in Canadian foreign policy. That policy, however, had been obliged to adapt to new circumstances which had transformed the institution and the context in which it operated.

The Commonwealth had been thoroughly exposed to the winds of change in the period between 1956 and 1965. Its membership expanded from eight to twenty-one, with populations ranging from Nigeria's tens of millions to Malta's hundreds of thousands. The old relatively wealthy, white members were reduced to a small minority demographically and numerically beside the large number of underdeveloped members from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean which were intent on putting their imprint on the organization. South Africa had been forced to withdraw. The British government had clearly indicated that it saw Britain's economic future within Europe, thus threatening Commonwealth markets in Britain. Aid initiatives, joint Commonwealth ones as well as bilateral programmes developed by wealthier members such as Canada and targeted specifically at Commonwealth recipients, were put in place for the new members' benefit. And by 1965, members had even established a once

¹"The Present and Future Character of the Commonwealth", 4 June, 1957.
PAC RG 25 vol 3445 file 1-1957/3A.

unthinkable secretariat - an old idea repeatedly rejected in earlier Commonwealth-Empire history.

As the Commonwealth's third incarnation emerged in the years 1956-1965, its demise, or at least serious enfeeblement, had been forecast time and time again. Its end had been predicted in South Asia at the time of Suez. Some ministers and officials from the old Commonwealth had feared that encouraging an open membership policy would ruin it. Menzies had lamented that the type of behaviour that had pushed out South Africa was spoiling it. Diefenbaker and some of his ministers were convinced that British membership in the EEC would destroy it. The danger of disintegration or obsolescence could never be entirely dismissed, yet, in typical British fashion as behooves an imperial spin-off, the Commonwealth somehow muddled through.

This outcome was not inevitable. There is a destructive component to any change and the Commonwealth could easily have fallen victim to it. At the same time, neither was its survival surprising or entirely a matter of luck. As the Canadian government tackled changes in the Commonwealth, it was seeing similar changes in the wider international community. The United Nations, for example, was also experiencing rapid membership growth and the same Afro-Asian states which were asserting themselves in the Commonwealth, with calls for a secretariat, were, together with similar states outside the Commonwealth, asserting themselves in the General Assembly and helping to launch new institutions such as UNCTAD in which to pursue their agenda. The new states were beginning to organize themselves through initiatives such as the Group of 77, the non-aligned movement and the OAU. The existence of this more organized, growing body of states in the international system underlined the usefulness of a sounding-board to maintain as good a relationship as

possible between the West and the new states. Had the Commonwealth fallen apart or never existed, Canada would still have had to deal with the effects of decolonization at the United Nations and the implications of European economic integration. The Commonwealth, however, gave the Canadian government an additional tool to use in the case of the former, and mis-use on occasion with the latter.

The manner in which Canadian governments used the post-war Commonwealth, and the types of interest pursued, differed fundamentally between the pre- and post-war periods. Unlike Mackenzie King's inter-war crusade for full Dominion autonomy, the Canadian government was not in the vanguard pressing for change between 1956 and 1965. Canadian policy responded to circumstances that were for the most part created by others. Thus, Canada supported a membership policy to accommodate the wishes of new and prospective members. It funded a variety of aid programmes to meet the needs of new members. Diefenbaker initially tried to avoid having to make a decision on South African membership; but pressure from new members made this impossible and ultimately swayed him to act as he did. Pearson supported new members when they pressed for a secretariat, but it is extremely unlikely that he would ever have proposed the idea. Even Diefenbaker's reaction to Britain's negotiations with the EEC was reactive rather than proactive. Diefenbaker's trade proposals in 1957 and 1958 were exceptions to this trend. But these, like his opposition to British EEC membership, were out of character with the main line of Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth's main role in Canadian foreign policy.

In the past, Canada had used the Commonwealth directly to seek solutions to important policy problems that defined Canada's political and economic

interests. To extend constitutional autonomy in foreign affairs or create a preferential trading community when markets elsewhere, especially the all important American market, were being closed off behind tariff walls, the Commonwealth was either an appropriate or the best available forum. Canada had few alternatives before 1945, and none for the task of constitutional development. In the post-1945 Commonwealth, however, Canada was very much a 'satisfied' power. There was little or nothing which Canadian governments, aside from Diefenbaker's, wanted to do by directly using the Commonwealth. Canada had successfully gained its complete independence within the Commonwealth, but had a plethora of other multilateral bodies with which to pursue its now vigorous foreign policy. In the mid-1940s, the residual attachment to Britain and the Crown on the part of Canadians of British descent, still well over half of the population, offered a strong inducement for continued Canadian membership in the Commonwealth, but did not necessarily provide a rationale for an active Commonwealth policy on the part of the Canadian government and definitely was not the basis for a 'common policy' Commonwealth. Canada was satisfied with a loose Commonwealth - that is, one that did not impede members' freedom of action elsewhere by expecting foreign policy conformity. Functional Commonwealth bodies such as the CATC were useful, but only to supplement the growing number of international organizations. Relations with Britain, one of the 'big three' in the 1940s, were still important, but the Canadian government preferred to pursue these bilaterally. It was the addition of the three South Asian members and the existence of the Cold War which catalyzed Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth in the late 1940s. The basic tenets of Canadian policy did not change, especially where policy commitments were concerned, but their presence in the organization stimulated the Canadian government to channel some of its internationalist activism into the Commonwealth.

A 'bridge' between 'East' and 'West', as Kipling knew the terms, provided a suitably vague, yet still important objective for Canadian policy. The Asian members gave the Commonwealth a renewed role in Canadian policy. The Cold War provided the reason to pursue it. Keeping newly independent countries, especially if not aligned with the West, out of the Communist bloc, offered a moral basis for the Commonwealth which was acceptable to Canada in a way which developing it as a replacement for the Empire could never be. Furthermore, the Canadian interests served by this bridging role were defined in terms of broader Western interests rather than narrow Canadian ones. This, then, was another area where Diefenbaker's trade initiative and his campaign against British membership in the EEC diverged from the general pattern of Canada's post-war Commonwealth relations. His pursuit of more narrowly defined Canadian interests had more in common with Canadian pre-war usage of the Commonwealth than with the post-war pattern.

Bridgemanship differed fundamentally from pre-war Canadian objectives in that the benefits accruing from it were essentially indirect. Gaining autonomy meant not being subordinate to Britain, gaining preferential access to markets meant trade, but the 'bridge' simply meant facilitating relationships. These relationships could only be converted into benefits elsewhere since Canadian governments shied away from using the 'consultative' Commonwealth to take direct action in the international community. It nevertheless constituted the motivating factor behind most constructive Canadian activity in the Commonwealth between 1956 and 1965.

After having given Canada an entrée to South Asia in the first post-war decade, the Commonwealth bridge did the same with respect to Canada's relations with Africa in the second. In so doing, the Commonwealth accounted

for the preponderance of Canada's relationships with developing countries.

There were other sources of Canadian ties with developing countries.

Missionary activity and periodically, especially towards the end of the period, the need to have Canada's foreign policy reflect its bilingual nature, meant that Quebec could be said to account for some part of them. But in general, through to 1965, Canada's relations with developing countries coincided with Canada's relations with new Commonwealth members. This was reflected by the fact that most of Canada's bilateral development assistance funding was directed to Commonwealth recipients. Even assistance to non-Commonwealth participants of the Colombo Plan had Commonwealth roots. Elsewhere, Canada's relations with Latin America states had never been developed by Canadian governments to the extent that relations with more geographically distant Commonwealth members, symbolized by their continuing insistence to remain outside the Organization of American States and its predecessor, the Pan-American Union.² The nascent 'Quebec factor' in Canadian foreign policy, however, suggested that this strong correlation between Canadian bilateral relations with developing countries and the Commonwealth was beginning to change. As it did, the Commonwealth's relative importance to Canadian foreign policy was bound to diminish as other links to developing countries were established.

²American pressure to join the OAS was strongest in the 1940s. The Canadian government was reluctant to be associated with American policy in the region or, alternatively, to face the prospect of having to oppose it. During the war and in the late 1940s, the incongruity of joining a group with a formal secretariat while opposing such a development in the Commonwealth was also a consideration, albeit a secondary one. See: Memorandum to Cabinet: Canadian Participation in the Pan-American System, 14 October, 1947. PAC RG 25 ACC 86-87/159 vol 11 file 2226-40 part 3. Canadian Participation in the Pan-American Union (1947-51) and Memorandum from Pearson to St.Laurent, 21 April, 1948. RG 25 ACC 86-87/159 vol 11 file 2226-40 part 3. Kennedy resurrected the issue of Canadian membership, and before Diefenbaker's relations with the US president soured, the Canadian prime minister briefly considered joining in 1960. See: Robinson, Diefenbaker's World. pp. 200-1.

Maintaining and developing the bridge to the Commonwealth's new members, provided a rationale for aspects of Canada's foreign policy, but required some modifications to Canadian attitudes towards the modalities of Commonwealth cooperation. Whereas Mackenzie King had relentlessly obstructed any effort to create new Commonwealth institutions, seeing them as a means to exert British direction over other members, his successors recognized their utility. They did not, however, depart from Mackenzie King's concept of a Commonwealth built primarily of bilateral relationships. At no point in the post-war period could Canadian governments be said to have controlled how the Commonwealth developed, but they could, and did, try to encourage some types of developments and discourage others. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Canadian government continued to block what it saw as British efforts to multilateralize the Commonwealth to better control its direction and promote more active cooperation or more formal institutional arrangements in the Commonwealth than Canadian governments felt appropriate to an association based on consultation rather than common policy.

In the midst of turning aside repeated pulls towards the centre, often in the guise of multilateral cooperation, Canadian governments had to accept that for the Commonwealth to be used as an instrument of foreign policy, it had to have a framework within which cooperation could take place. Finding the right balance of Commonwealth ties, in fact, conditioned much of Canadian policy in the 1950s and 1960s. The links between members, once secured by constitutional bonds, were now based on what were sometimes more intangible affinities which were also eroding through the 1950s and 1960s. The common legal and political institutions bequeathed by British rule, such as parliamentary government and an independent judiciary, were no longer held in common and the growing diversity of policy outlook and perceived interest

among members made coordinated action less and less realistic, especially as new members developed relationships with other states. To maintain the Commonwealth, Canadian governments did not try to resist this 'diminishment' of Commonwealth relations; nor did they try to counter it by actively trying to build stronger links between members which sought to overcome these differences. Instead, Canadian governments always accepted that the Commonwealth existed as a flexible association where members had always pursued their own policies as they saw fit. But within that association, Canadian governments recognized the need for actions to mitigate the gradual reduction of the traditional ties centred on Britain.

Countervailing actions helped both to reconcile the conflicting tendencies in Canadian approaches towards the Commonwealth and to retain new members' interest. Canadian governments always resisted assuming firm Commonwealth commitments which might entail policy harmonization and limit Canadian freedom of action. But they also did not want the Commonwealth to dissolve completely or become totally irrelevant to its members. Canadian governments were never as disposed as their British counterparts to plan or forecast the Commonwealth's future shape, but the more positive role of the Commonwealth in post-war Canadian foreign policy meant that they had to be sensitive to the state of the Commonwealth as a whole. The sorts of measures which can be characterized as 'countervailing' did not try to oppose or reverse the gradual reduction of 'Commonwealth' ties (as opposed to bilateral which had developed from these) between members but nevertheless reinforced appropriate cooperation between members to maintain a Commonwealth identity. Because this type of initiative did not try to counteract the increasingly heterogeneous perspectives which the Commonwealth had to accommodate, it was acceptable to other members, especially newer ones.

Moreover, because they tended to be exercised bilaterally within the multilateral framework provided by the Commonwealth, the Secretariat being a major exception to this, they did not give any semblance of yielding control to Britain. This was always a key consideration and even the new Commonwealth multilateralism in 1964-5 came about in circumstances in which Britain would not dominate the result. To reduce the chance that Britain could use Commonwealth cooperative initiatives to exercise control, Canadian governments insisted that any new programmes had to be primarily functional and not overtly political, although indirect political objectives underlay Canadian policy. It meant, to borrow a construction from Mackenzie King, Commonwealth cooperative institutions if necessary, but not necessarily Commonwealth cooperative institutions.

The general pattern of adapting Canadian policy to accommodate the needs of new members was frequently evident between 1956 and 1965. The BWI aid programme as conceived by the St. Laurent government and implemented by the Diefenbaker government was a bilateral scheme constructed to maximize the advantage to Canada and avoid committing Canada to a joint Commonwealth effort, yet also solidify the multilateral foundation of the bilateral action. The only 'Commonwealth' aspect of the BWI aid programme was, of course, that it was extended from one member to another largely because of that particular link. The main political benefits were intended to flow to the Canadian government as it demonstrated its sensitivity to the needs of developing countries. Nevertheless, some of this reflected back on the Commonwealth, the institution without which such bilateral Canadian largess would not necessarily be forthcoming and in the name of whose solidarity the Canadian government made its generous, self-promoting gesture. Likewise, the Canadian government's response to the Commonwealth aspects of the Suez Crisis

did not counter, but countervailed their damaging effects. If ever the diversity of Commonwealth interests and perspectives threatened to lead to actual disintegration in the first decade of multiracial membership, Suez was that time. The Suez Crisis dramatically demonstrated the folly and impracticality of expectations of ever being able to produce common policies on most international issues. Under the circumstances, any effort during or immediately after the crisis to counter directly what at its height was not so much a relaxation of ties between members as an unravelling, would almost certainly have failed. Rather than trying to pull the Commonwealth back together around a centre which, despite Canadian preferences for a Commonwealth of bilateral relationships, was still Britain, most of Canada's Commonwealth diplomacy during the crisis countervailed the forces pulling away by demonstrating that the old Commonwealth was not, in fact, tied to British policy - and that in some respects the UN was a more relevant and useful institution with which to take action.

The Canadian government's desire to counter the effects of Suez on the Commonwealth did not lead it to abandon its general foreign policy and the relatively limited role the Commonwealth had in it. Thus, Canada rejected proposals for a Commonwealth development bank as being an unrealistic effort to pursue objectives more appropriately pursued elsewhere. Such an institution might have been consistent with the Commonwealth's role as a bridge to developing countries, but it was far beyond Commonwealth members' ability to manage by themselves. On the other hand, more limited initiatives such as those unveiled at the 1958 CTEC and the 1960 SCAAP were within the capacities and collective wills of Commonwealth members themselves. Alone, these assistance programmes would not solve the development problems of members, but they helped to keep new members interested in the Commonwealth.

Maintaining the interest of new members meant accommodating their needs. Aid was only one way of doing this. Another important factor was how issues which shaped the structure of the Commonwealth were resolved. The Canadian government recognized that membership questions such as South Africa and general membership criteria could influence whether or not new members maintained their links with the Commonwealth. As Canadian policy makers observed when considering Commonwealth membership, the newly independent countries were going to be in the United Nations. Thus, even when the Canadian government had some initial reservations, as in the case of South Africa's forced withdrawal, the need to maintain new members' interest in the Commonwealth ultimately determined Canadian policy. Like St.Laurent before him over Suez, and, to some extent, Pearson after him over the secretariat, Diefenbaker found himself aligned with new members against the old. This put Canadian governments in step with the forces of change within the Commonwealth and thus better placed to be able to deal with them in a manner which helped the Commonwealth in relations with developing countries. Notwithstanding Diefenbaker's failed attempt to produce a turning point in Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth in 1957-8 when he intensified traditional Canadian activity and launched his trade initiatives and prevent what he thought was a turning point in 1961-3 with his opposition to Britain's EEC application, the important milestones for Canadian policy came not from Canadian decisions, but from these developments in the Commonwealth, most of which were the result of the admission of new members. The emergence of the 'third Commonwealth' provided impetus behind key outcomes, most critically in the period 1960-1 which saw the existing members agree to welcome all potential new members and the newer members assert their influence on the issue of South Africa.

In the period 1956 to 1965, the rewards from Commonwealth bridgemanship were rarely spectacular. In the first decade of the multiracial Commonwealth, the problems of Asia drew much of the world's and the Commonwealth's attention. Korea, Indo-China, the 1954 Geneva Conference settlement and the question of relations with China provided highly visible evidence of Indian and Canadian partnership in action. The two governments did not always agree on specifics, but they worked together. In the next decade, the Commonwealth's focus turned more towards the problems of Black Africa. The Canadian and Indian governments still wound up on the same side on issues such as South African membership, but there was no Geneva Conference to finalize Algerian independence and the Congo, for all of its horrors, was not as internationalized as was the Korea War. The earlier Indo-Canadian cooperation had been facilitated by the personal chemistry between St. Laurent, Pearson, and Reid, on the one hand, and Nehru and his principal foreign policy advisors, including even the mercurial Krishna Menon. The Liberal defeat in 1957, the same year that Reid's term as Canada's high commissioner in India ended, removed these factors making for cooperation. Diefenbaker was never on the same good terms with the Indian leadership as his predecessor had been. There were no African leaders on whom to base a similar bilateral relationship for dealing with the problems of Africa. Nkrumah may have fancied himself as an African Nehru, but the Canadian government never placed much trust in him. The multilateral alternative, the Secretariat, with a Canadian as Secretary-General no less, could offer only a partial replacement for such a relationship.

Indo-Canadian cooperation during the Suez Crisis was the most visible demonstration of any advantage from the 'bridge' in the period between 1956 and 1965. Otherwise, the return on the Canadian investment was restricted to

measures such as trying to get new Commonwealth members to moderate the wording of United Nations resolutions condemning colonialism so as not to humiliate Britain and France, both Canada's allies in NATO, and cause them to harden their positions. Invariably, any benefit came outside the Commonwealth. As Suez showed, in the crunch, Canadian governments relied on other means to solve international problems. The Commonwealth was not up to the task and far from that being a criticism of it, the Canadian government would have had it no other way.

Canadian concerns about policy independence in the 1940s had effectively precluded the Commonwealth from becoming anything other than a forum for discussion. The direct pursuit of important policy Canadian objectives occurred elsewhere. General political relations were handled at the United Nations; defence was handled through NATO; international economic matters were handled through institutions such as the GATT, IMF and IBRD; and even Anglo-Canadian relations had the UKCCC. The Commonwealth was developed as an extremely specialized relationship, whose scope was limited, but which could complement Canadian activities in other organizations, especially the United Nations. There was never any need to forego the advantages of Commonwealth membership in order to participate in other groupings, but the Commonwealth, when it could be used, was generally subordinate to Canadian priorities in those other groupings. Thus, Canadian relationships with developing countries were for use at the United Nations and in support of Western interests. Canada's Commonwealth preferences were negotiable at the GATT. The Canadian government at all times strove to ensure that the activities of Commonwealth bodies and programmes, from the Colombo Plan, to the CEC, CLC, CATC and all the rest, did not challenge the preeminence of other international institutions, especially those in the United Nations system.

which were active in the same field. Canada's close relationship with Sterling Area countries was used to put pressure on them to ease currency restrictions; it did not argue elsewhere on behalf of its Commonwealth partners. Canadian governments before and after Diefenbaker's basically supported British participation in European economic integration because NATO's European members probably would be strengthened. Above all, Canadian governments, even Diefenbaker, did not let the Commonwealth long obscure the fact that the United States was Canada's most important partner and the dominant Western power regardless of the temptation at times to see the Commonwealth as an economic or political counterweight to Canada's southern neighbour.

The Commonwealth could not enable Canada to escape from the United States, even if the Canadian government had wanted to try. The Commonwealth, could only provide a counterweight as a serendipitous outcome of being able to conduct part of Canadian foreign policy through an association of which the United States was not a member. As Canadian post-war planners realized in the early 1940s, multilateral organizations offered the best means for Canada to play an effective role in international issues in a world dominated by bigger powers. This implicitly accepted the need to balance them by cooperating with other states. The Commonwealth contributed to this general objective of facilitating Canadian international activity and provided a focus for Canadian diplomacy beyond the confines of the American dominated Atlantic world, but was neither developed nor wielded by Canadian governments as a counterweight to the United States. Diefenbaker's impetuous and impractical efforts at realigning Canadian trade represented an exception to this. Even then, the possible measures to implement his rhetoric held alarming implications for a Canadian economy which depended on, and gained

immensely from, ties with the Americans. For example, the balance of respective benefits from a free trade agreement with Britain could not justify exposing Canadian producers to British competition or reducing their access to American markets, especially for capital goods. Still more indicative of the limited room for manoeuvre available to Diefenbaker, the modifications to Canada's government procurement policies in order to assist Commonwealth producers were immediately jettisoned when they proved incompatible with gaining equal access for Canadian producers to the American defence procurement. Diefenbaker, demonstrating the dualism that had often marked Canadian relations with Britain since 1867, certainly wanted the Commonwealth to function as a means to balance ties with the United States, but he was not prepared to make any of the sacrifices of Canadian economic or political autonomy which were to be required in order to move beyond wishful thinking.

Despite Diefenbaker's stated fears that a British turn to Europe would destroy the Commonwealth and leave Canada exposed to American predations, any increase in Canada's concentration of ties with the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s is better explained by Canadian rather than British action. A review of the period 1956 to 1965 offers far more examples of Canada's growing ties with the United States than efforts to develop a counterweight against them. In 1957, the Diefenbaker government signed the NORAD agreement negotiated by the previous Liberal government, which established a joint command for North American air defence. In the next three years, it established a Joint Ministerial Committee on Defence, signed the Defence Production Sharing Agreement, agreed to jointly develop the Columbia River basin, and embarked on a tortuous road leading to Canada's acquisition of American nuclear weapons and the Diefenbaker government's

collapse in indecision. After the Liberals were back in power, their finance minister, Walter Gordon, tried to stem the American take-over of Canadian industry, but was forced to back down amid an outcry from Canadian business leaders. Finally, in 1965, Canada entered into a managed free trade agreement with the United States covering the vitally important automobile industry. Ironically, however, Canadian trade did become slightly less concentrated on the United States in the early 1960s, but not as a result of Commonwealth markets. Nevertheless, even this could not enable Canada to defy geography. Canada was firmly rooted on the North American continent and no matter how much Diefenbaker, in particular, may have wished, a declining Britain leading a loose Commonwealth could not cause things to be otherwise.

The Diefenbaker government's hope that the old world could redress the imbalance of the new caused it to deviate from the general pattern of Canadian behaviour towards the Commonwealth in two important instances. While it was quick to grasp the importance of the 'bridging' aspect of the Commonwealth, it was less astute when it came to accepting that just as the Commonwealth could acquire new roles, it could shed old ones. Diefenbaker's quixotic efforts to strengthen Commonwealth trading relationships and block British entry into the EEC tried to make the Commonwealth an instrument of direct action. The temptation for Diefenbaker to try to use the Commonwealth was, in some ways, understandable. Diefenbaker's efforts were analogous to the British efforts to develop the Commonwealth for their own purposes in the first post-war decade. If Canadians sometimes thought that British governments sometimes tried too hard to use the Commonwealth to cushion or compensate for Britain's declining position in international affairs, Diefenbaker could be accused of attempting the same thing for Canada. The first post-war decade represented a 'golden-age' for Canadian foreign policy

because of the temporarily enhanced position Canada occupied in the world as a result of its emergence from the war physically unscathed and newly industrialized. By the mid-1950s, much the same factors which were reducing Britain's relative international position were also reducing Canada's. For example, the consolidation of the US and Soviet Union as the only states capable of acting as superpowers and the apparently growing technological and military capability gap between them and other states in the international system reduced the importance of middle powers. So too the resurgence of the Japanese and West European economies reduced Canada's relative share of world trade and made competition in overseas markets more intense. But adopting a Commonwealth-oriented strategy to deal with these changes ignored the realities of the changed and changing Commonwealth. The very drive for an unencumbering Commonwealth which Canada had pushed for in the past and strove to maintain in the decade between 1956 and 1965 made this impossible. Diefenbaker's confusion as to what the Commonwealth could effectively be used for antagonized Britain, the Commonwealth partner that he most valued, and did nothing towards realizing the goals he had hoped to achieve.

Ultimately, the Commonwealth may be accurately characterized more by what it was incapable of doing than praised for what it could do. In practice, however, its limited scope only presented a problem when Canadian policy was based on unrealistic expectations. For the most part, Canadian governments, having taken care to ensure that the Commonwealth did not develop as a major negotiating or coordinating body were content to use it as a means to pursue special contacts with developing countries through discussion and limited cooperation in appropriate fields to maintain the new members' interest in the institution. Contemporaneous French policy maintained strong neocolonial ties, especially in defence and economics, with

France's former colonies in Africa. American policy was more narrowly focused on waging the Cold War and often lacked sensitivity to the concerns of new states. The Canadian government was aware, not least during its consideration of the Secretariat's establishment, that the British policy and the Commonwealth too could generate suspicions of neocolonialism or imperialism. Nevertheless, in Ottawa's view, the Commonwealth remained the best available means to promote Western interests by facilitating mutual understanding between the West and a sizeable number of developing countries in a manner that was not tied directly to furthering any single power's specific interests. Canada was thus in part a shaper of the post-1956 Commonwealth and yet also, much more than is sometimes recognized, a responder to others' initiatives within the Commonwealth.

APPENDIX : PATTERNS IN CANADIAN TRADE

The accompanying charts¹ portray aspects of Canadian trade patterns between 1926 and 1965. They are grouped in three sets. The first set (charts 1 and 2) portrays the relative shares of total Canadian imports and exports accounted for by the US and Britain for the years 1926 to 1965. The second (charts 3 and 4), does the same for the years 1946 to 1965, but includes data for Commonwealth countries other than Britain (as a group) and other non-Commonwealth countries (as a group) as well. The third set (charts 5 and 6), charts the value of Canadian imports and exports to and from these groups of trading partners for the same period.

Most immediately obvious is the concentration of Canadian trade on the United States. The premise that Britain could provide an economic counterweight to the United States as an alternative market for Canadian goods was plausible until the end of the Second World War when British currency controls drastically curtailed British purchases of Canadian goods. (Chart 2) But on the import side, American suppliers dominated the Canadian market even at the height of Commonwealth preferences in the 1930s. (chart 1) In the postwar period, the distribution of Canadian markets showed considerable stability (chart 4). The preponderant share of Canadian exports accounted for by the American market diminished somewhat as other economies regained strength. Even here, Canadian imports showed less tendency to shift away from the US than did Canadian exports. (charts 3 and 4)

¹ All data is derived from figures contained in: Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. External Trade Division. Trade of Canada Volume 1. Summary and Analytical Tables - Calendar Years 1966-1968. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1971) pp. 26-7. All figures are in current Canadian dollars.

The proportion of Canadian exports taken by Britain and the Commonwealth tended to decline, even with the gradual loosening of exchange controls through the 1950s. (Chart 4) The value of trade with Britain and the Commonwealth did increase during the late 1950s (charts 5 and 6), but not nearly as rapidly as trade with other countries. Indeed, the decline in the proportion of Canadian trade with the United States in the late 1950s occurred more because of growing trade elsewhere, much of it with Western Europe and Japan. There were slight increases in the shares of Canadian exports taken by Britain and Canadian imports supplied by Britain in the second half of the 1950s. (charts 3 and 4) These proportions, however, tended to fluctuate up and down over time anyway. The upward momentum in the percentage of Canadian imports from Britain, for example however, began between 1956 and 1957, before Diefenbaker's trade initiative could have had much if any effect. This momentum was not sustained beyond the early 1960s. The proportions of Canadian exports going to various markets also varied slightly up or down over time. Even with the lifting of British currency controls, the percentage of Canadian exports to Britain never attained the proportion they held in 1955, for example, in any year of Diefenbaker's premiership. Diefenbaker's Commonwealth trade policy, then, cannot be said to have had any significant impact on Canadian trade patterns.

CHART 1

CANADIAN IMPORT SUPPLIERS 1926-65
PERCENTAGE FROM THE US AND UK

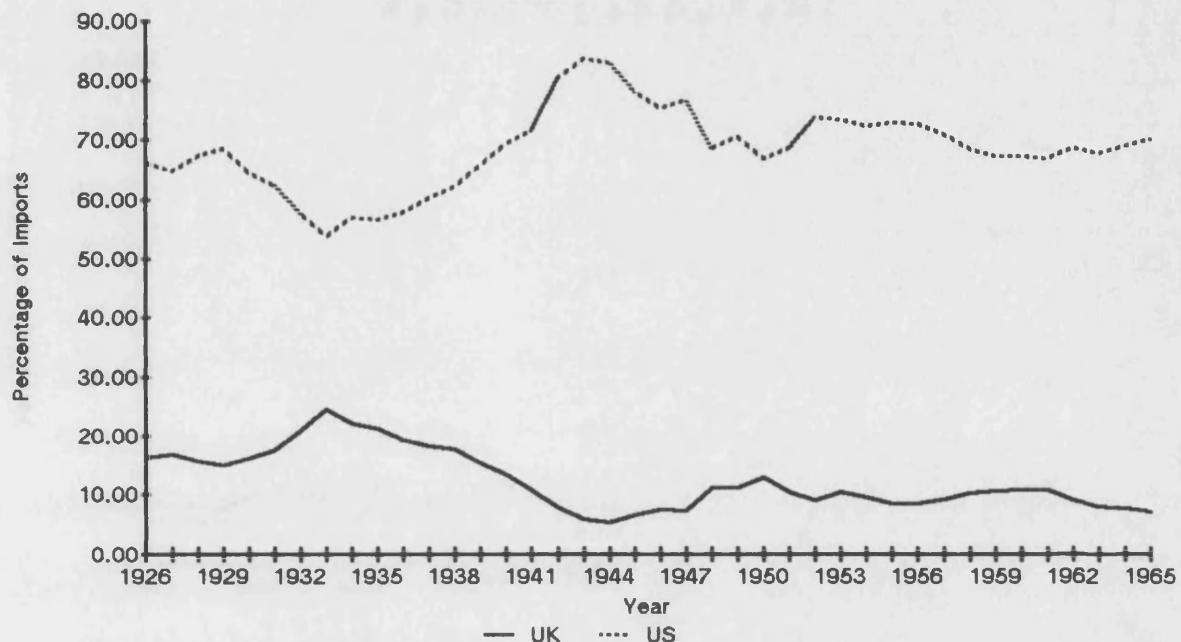


CHART 2

CANADIAN EXPORT MARKETS 1926-65
PERCENTAGE TO THE US AND UK

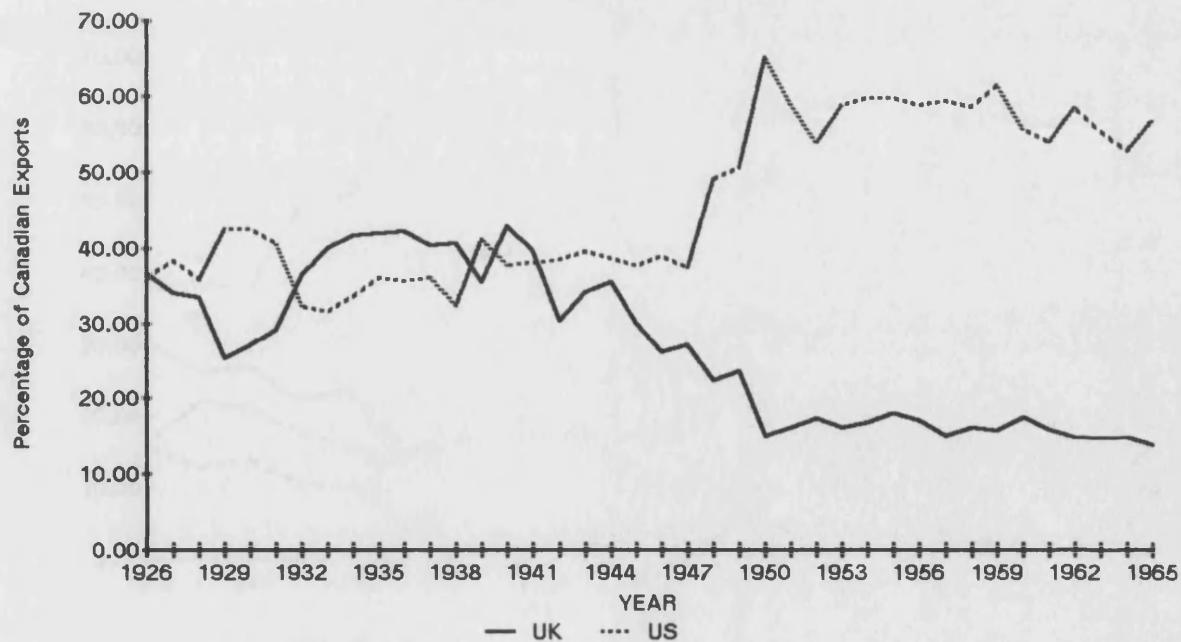


CHART 3

CANADIAN IMPORT SUPPLIERS 1946-65
BY SHARE OF TOTAL CANADIAN IMPORTS

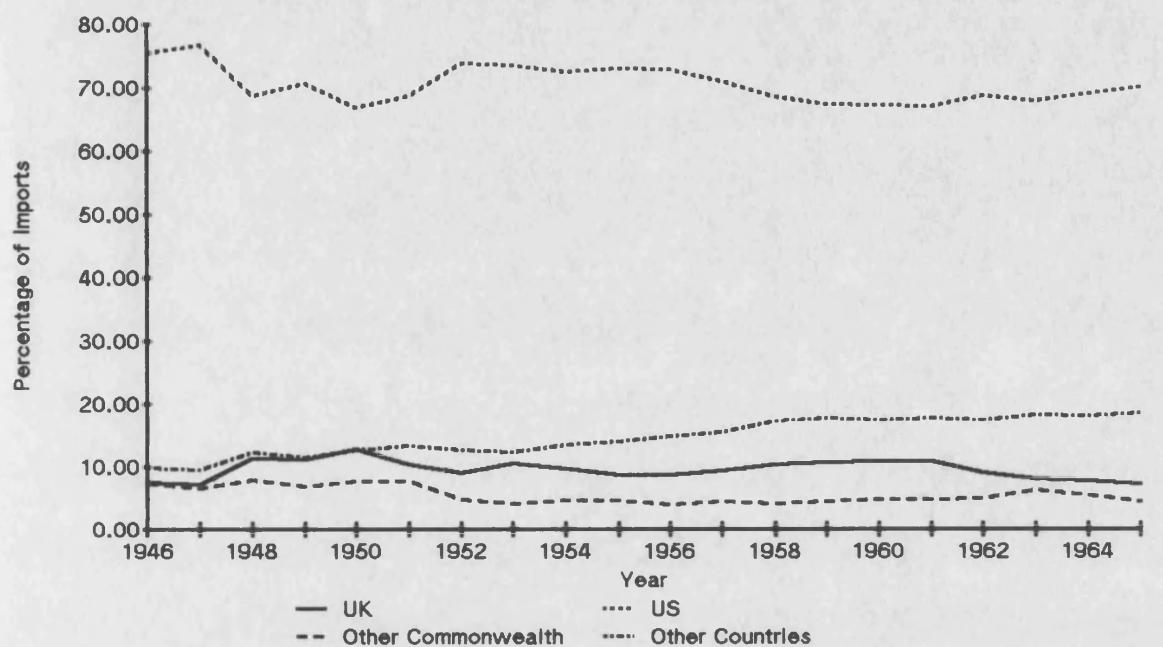


CHART 4

CANADIAN EXPORT MARKETS 1946-65
AS SHARE OF TOTAL EXPORTS

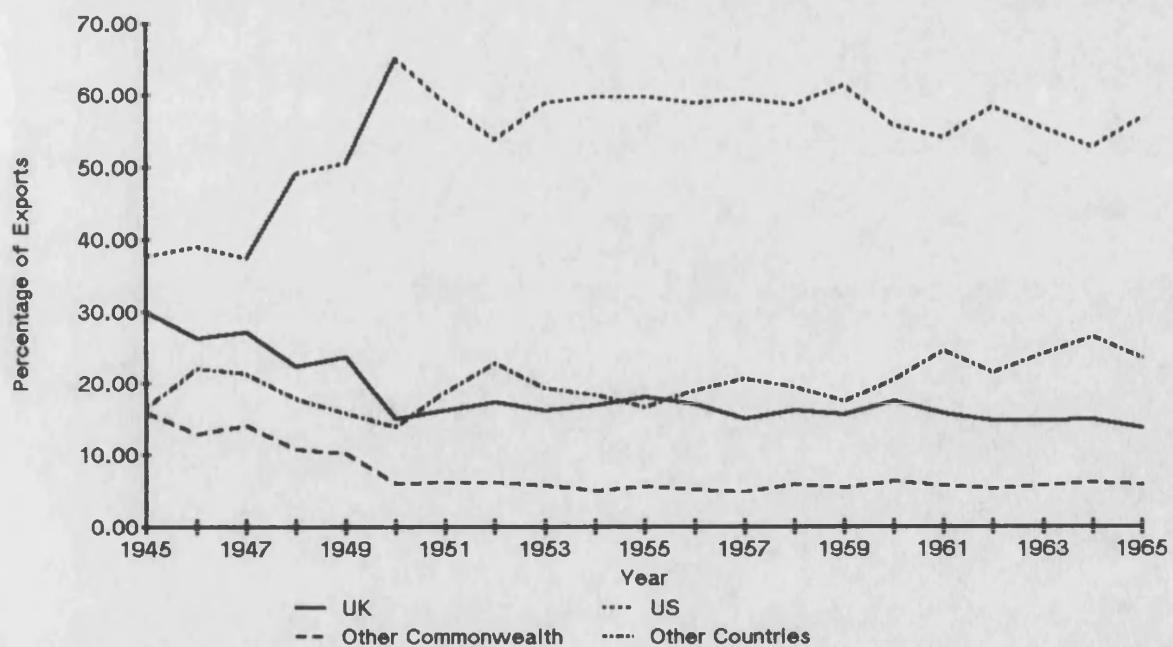


CHART 5

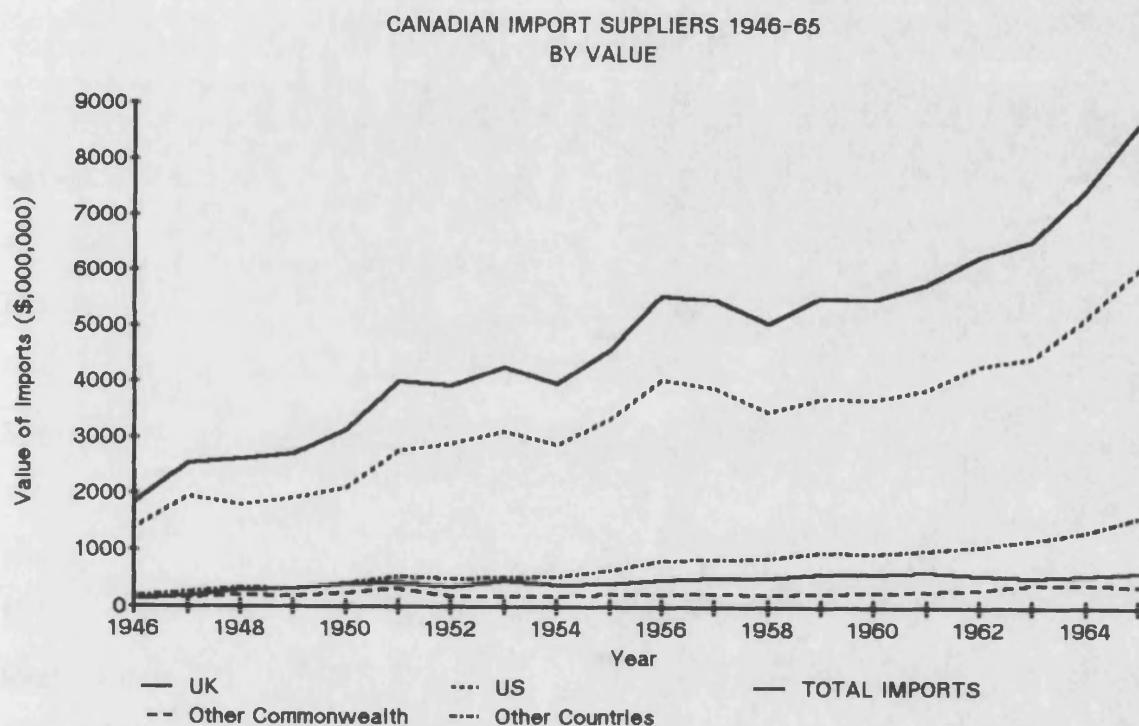
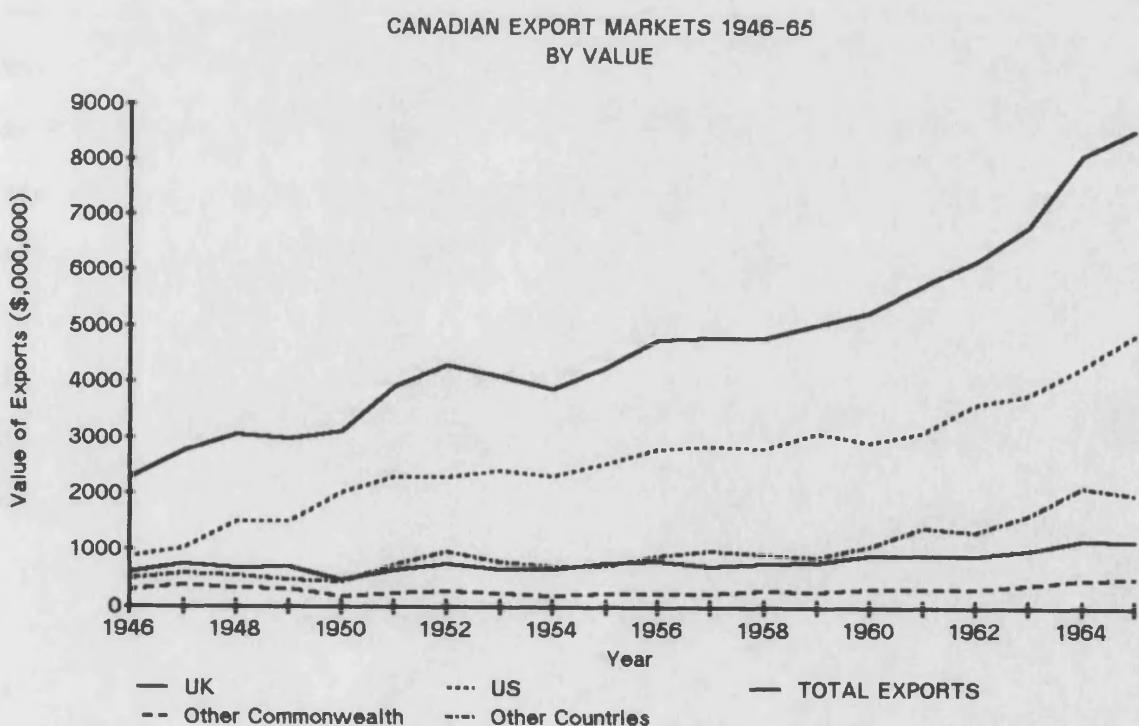


CHART 6



SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHIC STUDY - CANADA AND THE COMMONWEALTH: 1956-1965

This thesis is based on Canadian and British archival records, most of which were not previously available for use by researchers. The evaluation of this archival material, however, was aided materially by a review of existing literature. There has, however, been no broad treatment of the Commonwealth's role in Canadian foreign policy over the decade which forms the primary focus of this thesis. The period was included in a more sweeping study of Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth undertaken in an unpublished thesis by Frank Hayes, The Evolution of Canada's Commonwealth Relations, 1945 - 1968, submitted at the University of Toronto in 1979. This work had a similar, although not identical focus, as the present thesis, but in contrast to the present thesis, identifies an "extraordinary transformation" in Canadian policy towards the Commonwealth between the 1940s and 1960s. This is both a matter of interpretation and available materials. The author cites a paucity of primary material for the study, which although in theory made up for by the availability of interview subjects, many of whom are now dead, and partially overcome by means of restricted (non-attributable) access to some records, did affect his ability to assess the subject. Thus, Diefenbaker's announcement of aid to the British West Indies is given as proof of his broadening Canadian involvement even though records now available demonstrated that Diefenbaker was announcing a programme developed by his Liberal predecessors.

Published works on Canada's foreign policy since the Second World War are plentiful, but the coverage of the topic can be uneven. Understandably, the period from 1945 to 1957, the so-called 'golden-age' of Canadian diplomacy, is extremely well covered. So too are the more recent decades from the mid-1960s onward thanks in part to the coincidental spread of foreign policy studies at Canadian universities and the growing public

awareness of foreign policy issues which started with highly public reassessment of Canadian foreign policy by Pierre Trudeau's first government. Most of the decade which forms the basis of this study has received relatively little attention, although it has been by no means ignored. What has been overlooked, however, are Canada's relations with the Commonwealth. In all of the literature dealing with Canada's post-war foreign policy, there have been no single volume works published on this subject. As a result, the published literature on the subject consists of chapters in collections, periodical articles, and portions of larger works dealing with broader issues.

The closest thing to a comprehensive bibliographic tool for accessing the literature on Canadian foreign policy is provided by a series of bibliographies produced by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA) in Toronto. Volumes of the Bibliography on Canadian Foreign Relations covering materials published in the periods 1945-1975, 1976-80, and 1981-85 are available. A volume covering 1986-90 has just been published, and the entire period 1981 to the present is also available via an on-line bibliographic database, the 'Canadian Foreign Relations Database'. Less exhaustive, but more frequently published, are the bibliographic listings contained in journals, especially the Canadian Historical Review. This journal has the advantage that it is old enough that it was in publication at the time under study so that contemporary writings on Canada and the Commonwealth may be easily found, although most, if not all, would be in the CIIA bibliographies. Material written in the past decade can also be found in the Journal of Canadian Studies, and Etudes Internationales, the latter being the CIIA's french language journal but which surveys works published on both of Canada's official languages.

Canadian documentary sources do not cover the period well. The Department of External Affairs' official compilations, Canadian External Affairs do not extend beyond the early 1950s. The only other collections are those produced in paperback as part of the Carlton Library series, Canadian Foreign Policy 1945-54, edited by R.A. Mackay (1971), and Canadian Foreign Policy 1955-1965, edited by Arthur Blanchette (1977). These, however, consist of speeches, official statements, and published agreements. There are, however, separate sections on Commonwealth issues. James Eayrs has done much the same thing, with the addition of press comment, for the Suez Crisis, in The Commonwealth and Suez (1964). This covers other Commonwealth members in addition to Canada. Another basic documentary source is DEA's Statements and Speeches series.

The best means of establishing a fairly detailed outline of Canadian external activity is through another CIIA publication. The biennial Canada in World Affairs monograph series (covering pre-1939 to 1965 without break), surveys all areas of Canadian international activity, including Commonwealth affairs. Another source which does much the same thing from 1960 onwards, more briefly, but on an annual basis is the Canadian Annual Review. The DEA's annual reports are even shorter, but very useful in establishing the basic chronology. For Canada's Commonwealth relations, a series of annual articles in the Canadian Historical Review by D.J. McDougall does much the same thing, but only for the period 1946 to 1958.

Important general historical surveys of Canada during this period which cover Canada's international relations include Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English's, Canada Since 1945 (1981), Donald Creighton's The Forked Road (1976) and J.L. Granatstein's Canada 1957-1967 (1986). Only a small portion of each is devoted to Commonwealth matters, but they have the advantage of providing the broad context of Canadian policy. What is

unmistakable from this is the relative decline in the amount of foreign policy activity conducted through the Commonwealth. Where the accounts differ is in their explanation for this. Creighton, who does not use archival sources, argues in his chapter on Canada and the Commonwealth, that the post-war Commonwealth lost any purpose and that Canadian governments' denigration of ties with Britain in preference for closer ties with the US contributed to this. George Grant makes much the same point in Lament for a Nation (1965). Bothwell, Drummond and English, and Granatstein, on the other hand, describe a shift away from the Commonwealth as a result of policy differences between members and America's rise to dominance. Nowhere does Granatstein make this point more explicitly than in How Britain's Weakness Forced Canada into the Arms of the United States (1989).

The battle as to the cause of the Commonwealth's relative decline in importance to Canadian foreign policy is also played out in political memoirs and biographies. John Diefenbaker is the only one to take deliberate aim in this regard in his three volume One Canada (1975-6-7). These are poorly organized, highly partisan and self-serving, but their obvious flaws make for interesting insights into their author when used carefully. A particularly interesting comparison is with Harold Macmillan's account of the same events, and especially of the relationship between the two men. Where Diefenbaker respectfully boasts of his close relationship with one he considers to be among the powerful, Macmillan is at times thinly contemptuous of the erratic Diefenbaker. Of more substance are Donald Fleming's two volumes So Very Near (1985), although since the partisanship is less obvious, it is perhaps more ensnaring. Lester Pearson completed only the first volume of his memoirs, Mike (1972) before he died. This takes the story as far as 1948. The two subsequent volumes were edited and produced posthumously (1973-5) and lack Pearson's wit and humour. As might be expected, these are very good on the foreign policy aspects, although they suffer at times from the problem common

to many genial memoir writers, that is, they skirt around controversy. This is particularly evident in the account on Suez in the second volume.

Pearson has been the subject of several biographies, the most recent and historically rigorous are English's two volumes The Shadow of Heaven (1989) and The Worldly Years (1993). As their contribution to the 'did or did not the Liberals downplay the Commonwealth' debate, both Pearson and English point to the continuing importance accorded relations with Britain and the Commonwealth by the St.Laurent government. Pearson's son, Geoffrey, himself a former diplomat, has also contributed to the literature on his father's career. In Seize the Day: Lester B. Pearson and Crisis Diplomacy (1994), he focuses on key issues rather than a broad historical narrative. Among the many he deals with are the establishment of the Colombo Plan and Suez. Needless to say, the brief treatments he is able to give both in a compact book that covers a lot of territory are complementary, although not uncritical. They are parts of a whole which explains Pearson's role and methods as a statesman committed to building an international order founded on democratic values. Pearson's foreign minister, Paul Martin, produced his own versions of events in A Very Public Life (1985). He is a highly personal account which needs to be used carefully. It is uncharacteristically silent on the Commonwealth and the Secretariat, perhaps not wanting to draw attention to Martin's initial reservations about what became a very successful institution.

Louis St.Laurent, the other prime minister whose term of office overlaps with the decade under consideration did not write memoirs, although two of his advisors have produced books. Jack Pickersgill's My Years with St.Laurent (1975) and Dale Thomson's Louis St.Laurent: Canadian (1967) have yet to be superceded. Thomson's is more of a biography than Pickersgill's

which is fundamentally the author's own memoir and explanation of the Liberal government of the time.

Diefenbaker is not nearly so well served by biographers. Peter Newman's rather journalistic endeavour, Renegade in Power (1963) is more of a critique than a political biography. There are other books about him, but like Newman, they tend to concentrate on the enigmatic and controversial man himself and his domestic polities with less emphasis on his foreign policy. These will have to do until Denis Smith from the University of Western Ontario completes his work, the fruits of being the first to be given access to Diefenbaker's papers. Knowlton Nash's Kennedy and Diefenbaker (1990), by another journalist, is a worthwhile examination of Canada-US relations under Diefenbaker, but touches only incidentally on the Commonwealth. Both Diefenbaker and Pearson are the focus of interview collections by Peter Stursberg. The volumes which deal with foreign policy issues are Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained (1975) and Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma (1980). These are highly regarded and the interviews can contain interesting illuminations on policy debates, especially opinion within Cabinet, however, factual errors in the accompanying commentary suggest that both should be used with caution. Of the two, the one on Diefenbaker is of more direct use for Commonwealth matters since the subject does not specifically arise in the Pearson book.

The general thrust of four key surveys of post-war Canadian foreign relations is similar to that of Granatstein and Bothwell and company. Eayrs' Northern Approaches (1961) and the volume of In Defence of Canada (1972) dealing with this period, John W. Holmes' The Shaping of the Peace (1979, 1981), and A.F.W. Plumptre's Three Decades of Decision, by a scholar, a diplomat turned scholar, and a retired senior official respectively, discuss Canadian diplomacy and defence policy, diplomacy and activity in multilateral

institutions, and diplomacy with respect to international economic policy. Each offers lucid and insightful analysis, with Holmes' and Plumptre's benefiting from their careers close to the decision-making centre of Canadian policy. These works are primarily concerned with Canada's role in the creation of international institutions and the source of the Canadian policy drive towards them rather than the role of specific institutions in Canadian policy. They serve, however, to provide the foreign policy framework within which Canadian governments sought to use the Commonwealth in the post-war period.

Of special note is the theoretical framework of functionalism which is not only applied by scholars, but was actually an important consideration for politicians and officials in the mid-1940s as they developed the rationale for expanding Canada's international activities. The functionalism of Canadian officials differed in some respects from that of David Mitrany's in the The Functional Theory of Politics and Towards a Working Peace System (1946) in that they wanted participation in decision-making within international bodies to reflect a country's capacity to contribute to the matter at hand. They, like Mitrany, supported the creation of specific institutions to handle designated issues, but they did so as to be able to better differentiate functional capacities between issues, not to depoliticize areas of international activity with the view to gradually eroding state sovereignty. While the theory was no longer explicitly mentioned in Canadian documents after the mid-1940s, the pattern of behaviour it produced, ably described by Holmes in The Shaping of the Peace, endured. He describes the 'new age of functionalism' in an essay in Canada: A Middle Aged Power (1976). The concept also endured in the literature of Canadian foreign policy, and is discussed, for example, in an International Journal article by A.J. Miller in 1980, forms a strand of continuity in John Kirton and David Dewitt's study of changing paradigms in Canadian foreign policy,

Canada as a Principle Power (1983), and pervades Tom Keating's Canada and World Order (1993), which extends the study of Canadian activity in international organizations to the present. Keating's book is worth noting because while he is by no means the only political scientist to have treated multilateralism in Canadian foreign policy (for example, Kirton and Dewitt and a host of others), he at least relies on archival sources as far as they run.

Another important current which runs through the literature on Canadian foreign policy, and is particularly important to any consideration of the Diefenbaker years, relates to the concept of 'counterweight'. This concept occurs at some point in many works on Canadian foreign policy, but is explored specifically Michael Dolan's chapter "Western Europe as a Counterweight: An Analysis of Canadian-European Policy Behaviour in the Post-War Era" in Brian Tomlin's Canadian Foreign Policy (1978) and in terms of a 'countervailing influence', in Peyton V. Lyon's article in International Perspectives (1972), to mention but two. Frank Underhill gives this concept some historical depth in In Search of Canadian Liberalism (1960) where he examines the workings of the North Atlantic Triangle. Holmes devotes an entire section of Canada: A Middle Aged Power (1976) to the topic with five essays exploring different facets of the search for counterweights in Canadian foreign policy, the one dealing specifically with Britain is also available in Peter Lyon's Canada and Britain (1976).

There are no studies of Canadian foreign policy specifically covering the decade 1956 to 1965 as it does not neatly fit the political chronology. Nevertheless, there are a few studies on Canadian foreign policy during the Diefenbaker years which take up the bulk of the decade. For obvious reasons, the best treatment of Diefenbaker's foreign policy, not likely to be soon superceded, is by H. Basil Robinson, Diefenbaker's DEA liaison officer for

most of his premiership. Diefenbaker's World (1989) describes an idiosyncratic, intensely partisan, domestically focused prime minister who, despite his strong attachment to Britain and desire to re-orient Canadian foreign policy towards the 'Mother Country', did not significantly change the priorities he inherited from his Liberal predecessors. John McLin's Canada's Changing Defence Policy 1957-1963 (1967), focuses on an aspect of policy not directly handled through the Commonwealth, but gives a good general account of other key foreign policy considerations. It does, however, lack much in the way of historical perspective. Solomon Gabriel is better placed temporally, but geography may have been a problem. His book Foreign Policy of Canada: A Study of the Diefenbaker Years (1987) is very interesting in that it conveys an Indian perspective and devotes a great deal of attention to Canada's Commonwealth relations. It does not, however, use archival material and is based entirely on published documents and media sources.

Canada's relations with the Commonwealth are often dealt with as part of the voluminous literature on the Commonwealth itself. Not unnaturally, given the Commonwealth's historical origins, these works tend to focus on Britain, but just as the literature which imbeds discussion of Canada in the Commonwealth in a discussion of general Canadian foreign policy provides one sort of context, so too, this kind of treatment provides another. Nicholas Mansergh's The Commonwealth Experience (1969, second edition 1982) is too grand in scope to treat Canadian policy in this period in any detail, but he provides an unparalleled overview of Commonwealth history. Frank Underhill covers much the same territory as far as 1956, but much more briefly and from a Canadian perspective, in The British Commonwealth (1956). The different judgements as to whether "Britain jumped or was pushed" along the way make an interesting comparison. J.D.B. Miller, in The Commonwealth and the World (1965), Britain and the Old Dominions (1966), and Survey of Commonwealth Affairs (1974), is able to devote more attention to Canada. Indeed, Britain

and the Old Dominions, a study into the changing relationships among the old Commonwealth members, has a section devoted exclusively to Canada. His notion of the Commonwealth being a 'concert of convenience', which he discusses in The Commonwealth and the World, is, in many ways, particularly apt as far as Canada is concerned. David McIntyre's two books, The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and Impact 1869-1971 (1977) and The Significance of the Commonwealth 1965-90 (1991) touch on Canadian activity only superficially. McIntyre's main focus is on Britain as it coped with changes in Commonwealth. In the first book, especially, he describes Britain in the 1950s and 1960s as an American protectorate, disenchanted with the Commonwealth, as it showed itself unresponsive to British efforts at control. The second book gives more credit to British efforts to engage new members in new forms of cooperation in the early 1960s. McIntyre's description of the Commonwealth Secretariat's creation seems to rely heavily on Joe Garner's The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968 (1978). In and of itself, this is not entirely a bad thing because it is an excellent book, but this might account at least in part for the tone of the second book. Garner's book itself, is of course, written from the perspective of a senior British official, but one on intimate terms with the Commonwealth and Canada. Together with Arnold Smith's A Stitch in Time (1981), which gives a Canadian perspective, Garner's account stands as a key source on the Secretariat's creation. He covers much more than this, needless to say, and a common theme which pervades the book is the Commonwealth's importance to British policy throughout the decade 1956 to 1965.

Arnold Smith's book, of course, deals mostly with post-1965 Commonwealth, but it stands as the last major Canadian monograph dedicated exclusively to the Commonwealth. Indeed, the last book specifically on Canada and the Commonwealth is George Brown's Canada and the Commonwealth (1957). Historical assessments of Canadian relations with the Commonwealth

are at present confined to journal articles and chapters in collections. Once again, Holmes lead the way with a section of his collection The Better Part of Valour (1970) devoted to the Commonwealth. These essays bring together several pieces, some easily available elsewhere (Round Table (1966) and W.B. Hamilton and company's A Decade of the Commonwealth 1955-1964) and others not easily found. Margaret Doxey, another political scientist comfortable in archives has supplemented her work on the contemporary Commonwealth with more historical pieces on Canadian involvement. Her most recent treatment of the topic is her contribution to English and Norman Hillmer's Making A Difference? Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order (1993). This, however, touches only slightly on events in the period 1956-1965. She deals with this period in more depth in other works such as her chapter in Paul Painchaud's From Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau (1989) and her Behind the Headlines piece for the CIIA (1982).

There are also some similar works dealing with specific episodes related to Canadian relations with the Commonwealth. Michael Fry's chapter in Roger Louis and Roger Owen's Suez (1989) stands out as a valuable source on this subject. The same book also has an article by Peter Lyon on the Commonwealth and Suez, which although not dealing specifically with Canadian policy, is a valuable assessment of the crisis and the Commonwealth context of Canadian policy during it. Tareq Ismael also assesses the source and conduct of Canadian policy during Suez in his chapter in Canada and the Middle East (1976) which he and Peyton Lyon edited. This, however, is more concerned with the evolution of Canadian policy towards the Middle East than the Commonwealth. Robert Reford's Canada and Three Crises (1968) is rather journalistic, not based on archival material, and any one he spoke with to supplement the public record went no further. The best sources on Canadian policy at the time of Suez, however, are Escott Reid's first hand accounts. The three, Envoy to Nehru (1981), Hungary and Suez 1956: A View from New

Delhi (1986) and Radical Mandarin (1989), tend, inevitably, to repeat themselves on details, but since each is written as a part of a different whole, all three can be usefully reviewed.

South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth has also a few articles in addition to the mentions it receives elsewhere. Both Peter Harnetty's article in the Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies (1963) and Frank Hayes' in the International History Review (1980) probably give Diefenbaker too great a role than he deserves in the matter. Harnetty's account is restricted by the fact that he could not go beyond parliamentary debates and press reports. Hayes' article, a by-blow of his PhD thesis, was able to make use of partial, non-attributable access to Canadian documents. Brian Tennyson's Canadian Relations with South Africa (1982) chronicles the whole history of Canada-South Africa diplomatic relations up to the early 1980s. However, although his source material for the discussion of the South African withdrawal includes an interview with Diefenbaker, most of his material appears to be drawn from the public record and no archival material seems to have been used. Each in its own way gives a good account of the event, although Harnetty could now be considered superceded by Hayes and Basil Robinson and even by Tennyson.

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