MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS, 1948

(London, 11-22 October)

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Final Plenary Session of the Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers was held at No. 10 Downing Street this morning. At the end of the meeting the representatives of the other Commonwealth Governments placed on record their sincere thanks to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for presiding over the meetings and for his constant and valuable help.

2. The purpose of these informal meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers is to provide opportunities for a free exchange of views on matters of common concern.

3. The meetings held during the past two weeks have covered many such matters of common concern, including international relations, economic affairs and defence. The discussions have shown a substantial community of outlook among all the Commonwealth Governments in their approach to the present world problems. Fundamentally, this approach is based upon their support of the principles and purposes of the United Nations and their determination to make its work more effective. All the Commonwealth Governments are resolved to work together to establish world peace on a democratic basis.

4. In furtherance of these objectives, the representatives of Commonwealth Governments affirmed their purpose to build up the economic strength of their countries and to take all necessary measures to deter and resist aggression. At the same time they will do their utmost to encourage an increased production of wealth so as to achieve a just standard of living, especially for the people of the less developed countries of the world, as a constructive contribution to the preservation of world peace.

5. The economic forecast for the coming years made by the United Kingdom Government for the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation was considered in order to give the other Commonwealth countries an opportunity to examine its implications for their own economies. The conference reaffirmed the need for all the Commonwealth Governments, in formulating their policies, to consult with one another, so far as practicable, so that each can co-operate by taking into account the needs and policies of the others.

6. The United Kingdom Government outlined the nature of its association with other Western European nations under the Brussels Treaty, as a regional association within the terms of the United Nations Charter. There was general agreement that this association of the United Kingdom with her European neighbours to build up their economies and to deter aggression was in accord with the interests of the other members of the Commonwealth and also of world peace. It was agreed that other Commonwealth Governments should be kept fully informed of the progress of this co-operation with Western Europe.

7. The discussions showed a general desire to maintain and extend methods of consultation between all the Governments of the Commonwealth. Detailed recommendations for improving Commonwealth consultation on foreign affairs, economic affairs and defence are being submitted to the Governments for consideration and decision.

8. The Meeting recorded its support for Ceylon's application for membership of the United Nations. The representatives of all the other Commonwealth Governments took note of the constitutional documents published by the Ceylon Government in Ceylon Sessional Paper XXII of 1947 under the title 'The Independence of Ceylon' and in Ceylon Sessional Paper III of 1948 under the title 'The Constitution of Ceylon.' They agreed to take this opportunity of their meeting in London to place on record their recognition of Ceylon's independence and to affirm that Ceylon enjoys the same sovereign independent status as the other self-governing countries of the Commonwealth which are members of the United Nations.

9. This meeting included for the first time the Prime Ministers of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Their presence symbolised the extension of the bounds of democratic freedom which reflects the spirit and steadfast purpose of the Commonwealth. These new representatives of sovereign nations brought to the deliberations of their colleagues from the other free countries of the Commonwealth the wisdom of their ancient civilisations vivified by the dynamism of the modern age. This blending of the West and the East in the lofty task of building a lasting peace on the foundations of freedom, justice and economic prosperity provides a new hope for harassed mankind.

21 October 1948

Heads of Delegation

Australia	The Rt Hon H V Evatt, Deputy Prime Minister
Britain	The Rt Hon Clement Attlee, Prime Minister
Canada	The Rt Hon W L Mackenzie King, Prime Minister
Ceylon	The Hon D S Senanayake, Prime Minister
India	Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister
New Zealand	The Rt Hon Peter Fraser, Prime Minister
Pakistan	The Hon Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister
Southern Rhodesia	The Rt Hon Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister
Union of South Africa	The Hon E H Louw, Minister of Mines and Economic Affairs