

## **MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS, 1953**

*(London, 3-9 June)*

### **FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

The final plenary session of the Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers was held this afternoon.

The Prime Ministers have met at a time of general rejoicing. The presence at the Coronation of representatives of all parts of the Commonwealth has illustrated the unity and the variety of the Commonwealth association of which Her Majesty is the Head. The discussions which the Prime Ministers have held once more demonstrated the concord which exists between all the Governments and peoples of the Commonwealth, despite their varying interests and circumstances, in their approach to the major problems of the world today.

This sense of concord has been strengthened by the discussions of the past week. These have enabled the Prime Ministers to undertake a comprehensive and realistic review of the international situation; and there has been a personal exchange of views which will help all the Commonwealth Governments to continue their conduct of foreign relations with renewed understanding of the policies and interests of their partners in the Commonwealth.

The Prime Ministers found it specially valuable to have this opportunity for personal discussions so shortly before the proposed meeting at Bermuda between the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of France. They reviewed the state of relations with the Soviet Union and agreed that no opportunity should be lost of composing, or at least easing, the differences which at present divide the world. But they recognised that the democracies must maintain their strength and exercise unceasing vigilance to preserve their rights and liberties.

The Prime Ministers reviewed recent developments in Western Europe. The Commonwealth countries associated with or interested in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation expressed the hope that the European Defence Community would be established at the earliest possible date.

The Prime Ministers followed with close interest the concluding phases of the armistice negotiations in Korea. They noted with gratification that long and patient labours have now led to the conclusion of an agreement on prisoners of war and thus made way for the early signature of the Armistice Agreement. They exchanged views on the steps which will have to be considered after the end of hostilities in Korea for the promotion of stability and progress throughout the Far East and South-East Asia.

The current problems of the Middle East were also discussed. The Prime Ministers recognised the international importance of the Suez Canal and of the effective maintenance of the military installations in the Canal Zone. They agreed that it is in the common interest that the outstanding issues in the

Middle East should be settled on the basis of ensuring the peace and security of the Middle East countries, consistently with the sovereignty of each, and promoting their social and economic development.

The Prime Ministers reviewed developments in the economic field following the Commonwealth Economic Conference of December, 1952. They agreed that the Commonwealth countries should adhere firmly to the long-term objectives and lines of policy then laid down. In the meantime it was essential to take advantage of the improved outlook for the sterling area by continuing to strengthen the economy of each of the countries concerned. Particular attention was given to the need for stimulating economic development for expanding exports and, consistently with the maintenance of adequate reserves, for removing progressively restrictions on trade over as wide an area as possible and especially within the Commonwealth and the sterling area.

Throughout this Coronation period the Prime Ministers have taken advantage of many opportunities for informal talks on matters of particular interest to two or more countries and on general subjects which have not been discussed in the plenary sessions. Although those sessions are now over, some of the Prime Ministers will be remaining in London for a further period during which these exchanges will be continued.

*9 June 1953*

### **Heads of Delegation**

<b>Australia</b>	The Rt Hon R G Menzies, Prime Minister
<b>Britain</b>	The Rt Hon Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister
<b>Canada</b>	The Rt Hon L S St Laurent, Prime Minister
<b>Ceylon</b>	The Hon D S Senanayake, Prime Minister
<b>India</b>	Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister
<b>New Zealand</b>	The Rt Hon S G Holland, Prime Minister
<b>Pakistan</b>	The Hon Mohammed Ali, Prime Minister
<b>Southern Rhodesia</b>	The Rt Hon Sir Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister
<b>Union of South Africa</b>	Dr The Hon D F Malan, Prime Minister