

Developments in China also were among the matters discussed at both Meetings. In regard to recognition of the Chinese communist government, as in all matters of concern to Commonwealth nations, it was understood that each government must take the responsibility of making its own decision. Until mid-1952, the Chinese communist government had been recognized by the three Asian members of the Commonwealth and by the United Kingdom, while the other members of the Commonwealth, including Canada, continued to refrain from recognition.

A new and very serious problem in northeast Asia was created by the invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950, by North Korean communists. Canada and the other countries of the Commonwealth which were also members of the United Nations supported the action taken by the Security Council to assist South Korean resistance. Most of them, including Canada, contributed armed forces for this purpose. A Commonwealth Division, consisting of United Kingdom, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand combat forces and a medical unit from India, was organized as part of the United Nations forces, and has acquitted itself with distinction. The nations of the Commonwealth, like many other members of the United Nations, have been gravely concerned over the destruction to life and property in Korea, and are contributing to relief and rehabilitation.

The 1951 Meeting of Prime Ministers gave careful attention to the discussions on the Korean problem in particular, and on a Far East settlement in general, which were simultaneously being carried on at the General Assembly of the United Nations at New York, and exchanged views on the means by which their representatives at New York could best assist in these discussions. Close liaison was maintained with the United Nations Assembly.

In a declaration issued at the close of the 1951 Meeting, the Prime Ministers, in addition to urging speedy settlements with Germany and Japan, stated they would welcome any feasible arrangement for a frank exchange of views with Stalin or with Mao Tse-tung, and insisted that they did not seek to interfere in the affairs of the Soviet Union, China or any other country. The Commonwealth countries, it was declared, did not regard themselves as an exclusive body, but welcomed co-operation with other nations. It was recognized, however, that so long as the fear of aggression existed the Commonwealth countries would have to strengthen their defences. Continued support of the United Nations and of the Colombo Plan was affirmed.

Both the 1950 Meeting of Foreign Ministers and the 1951 Meeting of Prime Ministers recognized the influence of economic problems upon the international situation, and gave consideration to these important questions.

One economic problem which was becoming acute in 1951 was the shortage of raw materials, and the consequent maldistribution of manufactured and semi-manufactured goods. The Meeting of Prime Ministers felt that in these circumstances it would be desirable to have closer and more regular consultation among Commonwealth countries on all questions of supply and production. One result of their examination of this problem was the calling of a meeting of Commonwealth Ministers concerned with supply matters, which opened at London on Sept. 24, 1951, and made arrangements to increase the exchange of information both on raw materials and on finished goods, and to facilitate deliveries of manufactured articles to countries of the Commonwealth which might require them.