

Canada gave its full support to a resolution for resolving the prisoner-of-war question, introduced by India and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, in December 1952.

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 that 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. The meeting 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 that might require them.

The deterioration in the United Kingdom's financial situation that took place in the autumn of 1951, and the continuing difficulties of the Sterling Area in general, raised urgent problems for all members of the Commonwealth, not excepting Canada, the only non-sterling member. A meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers accordingly took place at London in January 1952 at which measures that might be taken to meet the situation were discussed; important steps were later taken by the countries concerned to arrest further deterioration in their own positions. It was felt that further exchanges of news might be useful and the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth countries met at London in November 1952 to review the position and outlook and consider what further measures might be taken to strengthen the economic position of the Sterling Area Commonwealth countries and what could be done to achieve an effective multilateral system of trade and payments. A plan for a collective approach to freer trade and payments was formulated and this plan has since been discussed with the United States and Western European Governments.

International tension, besides adversely affecting the world's economic development during the past three years, also made it necessary to devote to strengthening the defences of Commonwealth countries resources that would normally have