

The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, which brought together representatives of the Parliaments and Legislatures of the Commonwealth from all over the world, provided a striking occasion for the demonstration of the strength of that feeling which binds together the diverse nations and peoples of the Commonwealth. The Canadian delegation to the Coronation included the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers, Leaders of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the Senate, Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons, the Chief Justice, and representatives of Canadian ex-servicemen's organizations. Arrangements for the Coronation were co-ordinated by the Coronation Commission, consisting of representatives of Commonwealth countries meeting at London. In Canada, the Government was advised by the Coronation Committee of Canada on all Coronation matters of special concern to this country. At posts abroad, Canadian diplomatic and consular representatives united with their colleagues from other Commonwealth nations in arranging celebrations.

Following the Coronation, Commonwealth Prime Ministers held a series of meetings at which they reviewed the international situation and held informal talks on matters of particular interest to two or more countries. The communique issued at the end of the meetings stated: "The discussions which the Prime Ministers have held have 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 problems of the world today."

These meetings continued a long series of exchanges that have taken place through the years. Previous meetings had discussed such important matters as peace settlements, developments in China and Korea, and economic problems.

One outstanding example of practical Commonwealth co-operation continued in Korea, where the Commonwealth Division, consisting of combat forces from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and a medical unit from India, which had acquitted itself with distinction, was maintained on guard after the Armistice of July 27, 1953. The nations of the Commonwealth, like many other members of the United Nations, have been concerned over the destruction of life and property in Korea, and are contributing to its relief and rehabilitation.

In respect of economic matters, although difficulties caused by the shortage of raw materials abated, other problems persisted. The most important continued to be the financial difficulties of the Sterling Area, which raised urgent questions for all members of the Commonwealth, not excepting Canada, the only non-sterling member. At a meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers held at London in January 1952, measures to meet the situation were discussed and important steps were later initiated by the countries concerned to arrest further deterioration in their own positions. In November of that year, the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth countries reviewed the position and produced a plan for a collective approach to freer trade and payments. Their proposals were later discussed with the United States and Western European Governments. During the period under review, substantial progress in the position of the Sterling Area was achieved. Progress is reflected in an improvement in the balance of payments, the expansion of trade, and an expansion of development schemes. In January 1954, Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting at Sydney, Australia, reviewed the existing position in the light of these developments and re-affirmed their faith in the collective approach to freer trade and payments.