

and economic union with her neighbours in Western Europe and her participation in the European recovery programme have raised the question of the compatibility of these new associations with her Commonwealth ties and especially with a system of Imperial preference. Though the settlement with India does not belong to the period under review, the impending rejection by India of allegiance to the Crown naturally affected what had been hitherto the common basis of Commonwealth membership and the guarantee that a member would participate in and respect the intimate forms of consultation and co-operation employed within the Commonwealth. With the entry of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon the Commonwealth is now no longer predominantly white, Christian, and Western European in character, and the basis has been laid for a new partnership embracing differing races, religions, and cultures.

Such developments and the need for consultation on many other post-war problems of wider international significance were among the factors leading to a meeting of the heads of Commonwealth Governments, which began in London on 11 October, 1948. As is usual with such gatherings, the activities of the conference were primarily directed not to the attainment of formal decisions, but to a free and frank exchange of views. The identity of Commonwealth opinion on certain issues was, however, made clear in the final communique issued on 21 October. All Commonwealth Governments, the communique stated, shared a common approach to the present world problems based upon their support of the principles and purposes of the United Nations and their determination to make its work more effective. All agreed that as a constructive contribution to the preservation of world peace it was necessary not only to build up their own economic strength and to take all means to deter and resist aggression, but also to encourage the attainment of a just standard of living throughout the world. All pledged themselves to consult with one another on economic problems and approved the participation of the United Kingdom in arrangements for the economic rehabilitation of Europe. A general desire was shown to maintain and extend methods of consultation between all Governments of the Commonwealth. The communique recorded the conference's support for Ceylon's application for membership of the United Nations, and concluded with a reference to the responsible part played in deliberations by the representatives of the new members of the Commonwealth—Ceylon, Pakistan, and India.

[During and after the conference, representatives of New Zealand, Australia, and Canada (Commonwealth countries with substantial Irish populations) participated with representatives of the United Kingdom and Eire in discussions on the future relationship of Eire with the Commonwealth.]