

“The Governments of the other countries of the Commonwealth, the basis of whose membership of the Commonwealth is not hereby changed, accept and recognize India’s continuing membership in accordance with the terms of this declaration.

“Accordingly the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon hereby declare that they remain united as free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations, freely co-operating in the pursuit of peace, liberty and progress.”

These constitutional questions have been the sole subject of discussion at the full meetings of Prime Ministers.

London, 28 April, 1949.

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HON. P. FRASER

The results of the Prime Ministers’ meeting just concluded mark yet another phase in the development of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is a creditable achievement to have devised a method by which the Indian people can remain within the family of nations of the Commonwealth. There can be no doubt as to the desirability of keeping within the Commonwealth the great nation of India, with its population of 350 million people.

So far as New Zealand is concerned, we would have preferred to continue to accept the ties and form of association existing at present, but obviously conditions that are suitable to one member of the Commonwealth are not equally acceptable to others, and the Declaration which has now been agreed upon does, in fact, represent the maximum amount of agreement possible. I should like to stress particularly that the position of New Zealand so far as its allegiance to the Crown is concerned is unchanged and unimpaired. In the Declaration, the King is described as the symbol of the free association of the independent member nations of the Commonwealth, and as such, the Head of the Commonwealth. It will be noted, moreover, that His Majesty the King is recognized as Head of the Commonwealth by India as well as by the rest of us who continue to owe allegiance to the Crown.