

12.04 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: COMMONWEALTH
PRIME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I should like to place on the Table of the House a copy of the final communique issued by the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

A great part of this probably has appeared in the press, but I think it would be desirable to have a correct and full copy of it for reference by hon. Members.

I went to this Conference with considerable hesitation. Normally, I do not like to be away from India, when Parliament is meeting, more especially, during the Budget Session. Also, at that time, a very dear and valued colleague of ours was lying seriously ill. Nevertheless, ultimately, I thought that I ought to go, as this was an unusually important meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, and as events proved, it was an important meeting, and it came to several decisions which have a much wider significance than normally our decisions had previously.

This meeting was held, not in the normal course, but for special reasons, and it was confined to the consideration of certain specific major problems, among them being disarmament, the structure of the United Nations, and certain constitutional problems affecting the Commonwealth itself. In addition, we considered a matter of urgent importance, that is, the Congo situation. We confined our attention to these matters.

But, one matter, in a sense, overshadowed all our proceedings. This was the question of South Africa. We discussed it at some considerable length there, but apart from our discussions, it was a matter which was in the minds of all of us present

there, even when we were discussing other matters, because the whole future of the Commonwealth depended upon that.

It came up, as perhaps the House knows, because of an application of the South African Union Government for continuing its membership of the Commonwealth, even though it is becoming a Republic on the 31st May this year. Normally, internal matters are not considered by this Commonwealth Conference. Also, the fact that a country becomes a Republic has ceased to be a novelty in the Commonwealth; and for us, especially, to oppose a country becoming a Republic would be rather odd. There was no question of our opposition to that matter.

Nevertheless, all this was connected in people's mind with the racial policies of the South African Union Government, and it was not possible, even though technically it might not perhaps have fitted in, to ignore this major fact in considering any matter related to the South African Union Government.

As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister of South Africa, who was present, himself agreed to this matter being considered or taken up, and it was discussed at some length. All the other Prime Ministers present there felt that one of the basic conditions of the Commonwealth continuing or surviving was a strict adherence to the policy of racial equality, and that the policy of the South African Government was not compatible with it. In fact, it was definitely opposed to it, as we all know. And, therefore, this deadlock arose and as the South African Government, that is, its Prime Minister, was completely unwilling to make the slightest change in the policies pursued by them in South Africa, there was no way out of the deadlock, except some kind of cleavage in the Commonwealth itself. It was clear that if these policies were pursued even by one Member-Government of the Commonwealth.

they would react on many other Members who would find it difficult possibly to continue in the Commonwealth. I need not go into this matter, because everyone here, not only in this House but in this country, feels strongly about these matters; it is a question not only of fundamental human freedoms, but of national self-respect. And it seemed quite improper for us to be a member of an organisation which itself tolerated this kind of racial policies which are pursued by the South African Union Government. On the other hand, the Prime Minister of the South African Union was equally certain about his own position and justified it. There was no meeting ground at all on that issue. There had, therefore, to be some kind of a break.

Now, no one likes—at least most people do not like—breaking something. It is always easier to break than to construct. It was not easy for us therefore, to view the prospect of breaking this up, but events were such that there was no alternative left, and ultimately the Prime Minister of the South African Union withdrew his application for continuing membership. Thus this question, in so far as the Commonwealth is concerned, was solved for the moment.

This was a very significant step that the Commonwealth took, but I believe that has strengthened it and certainly not weakened it. It has even a wider significance than it might appear at first sight, because thereby the question of racial equality has been put on the highest level in the world context. As a matter of fact, the United Nations Charter itself contains this, and what the South African Government has been doing was in direct violation of that Charter.

So this decision itself in regard to South Africa has made this session of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference a very special and unique one. This has attracted world attention, and its consequences

will be far-reaching. It must be realised, however, that by South Africa going outside the Commonwealth, the South African policy of *apartheid* or segregation or racial discrimination does not diminish at all. In fact, the Prime Minister of South Africa made it quite clear that he would pursue it as vigorously as ever. In fact, it was because of that that the break came.

So that the evil continues and will continue in an aggravated form. The only satisfaction we can have is that we are not associated with it in any form through any organisation. That is some satisfaction, no doubt; here it is not a question of India only when I say 'we', but many other countries also. And the fact that this has evoked comment in almost every country in the world favourably to the Commonwealth insisting on racial equality to the extent even of South Africa leaving it itself shows that in this matter at least, the South African Union Government is almost completely isolated from world opinion.

It is not right for me to say what happened inside the meetings of the Commonwealth Conference. But it is well-known that the issue, as it came up there, was not an issue supported on the one side by Asian and African members only, but it was supported really by all the members in varying degrees, and the South African representative stood alone by himself in his particular views.

Therefore, while this, I think, has been a good development from every point of view, we must remember that the policies under which vast numbers of Africans as well as people of Indian descent suffer in South Africa are continuing, and will continue till other developments take place or other pressures of world opinion or world organisations result in changes being brought about. We have, therefore, to be wide awake in these matters and not be complacent. It is surprising that in Africa which is today in a state of great ferment

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and change and where many independent countries have emerged in the last few months even, and will continue emerging in the next year or two, that in that great Continent which is undergoing such vast changes, in South Africa these policies of racial segregation and suppression should still continue. It is impossible for me to imagine how this can continue for long without bringing about conflicts, and vast conflicts, involving many countries, because it is quite intolerable for the new countries of Africa, as indeed of Asia too, to tolerate such a situation.

So far as the Commonwealth is concerned, this odd fact emerged, that these independent countries of Africa which are members of the Commonwealth will not even be permitted—and I suppose that applies to Asia too—to have their Missions in South Africa, normal diplomatic Missions, because, apparently, they belong to a different race. The Prime Minister of South Africa pleading for or trying to explain his own policy, denied that this was racial inequality at all. He said this is a policy of separate development of different races.

An Hon. Member: Co-existence!

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I was almost expecting him to say—I do not know why he did not say it—that this was a policy of peaceful co-existence!

Now, looking at this South African development in the context of events in Africa specially, it has the greatest importance. In this connection, may I add that South West-Africa, which was a mandate given by the old League of Nations to the South African Government through the British Government, has been practically absorbed governmentally and otherwise by the South African Union? That has been a violation of that mandate. This question only recently came up, was going to come up, before the United Nations, and it is an important matter that this mandate should be honoured.

Then looking at Africa again in another context; in the context of the continuation of colonialism, we find that while great progress has been made, and is being made there and free countries are emerging, there are still some countries which are not only completely under colonial domination but are probably experiencing the worst forms of colonial exploitation, more particularly the Portuguese colonies there.

Africa indeed today in a variety of ways is attracting a great deal of world attention. There is the situation in the Congo which we discussed there at some length, and the House, no doubt, has been following those developments in the Congo. In the Communiqué, there is a brief reference to the Congo where it says that they approve of the recent resolution of the Security Council passed, I think, on February 21, and want it to be implemented fully and rapidly. The general impression in the Conference there, and elsewhere, indeed wherever I went was one of great appreciation of the Indian action in sending our armed forces there, sending them more particularly at that particular time when the United Nations were facing very great difficulties in the Congo.

I should like just briefly to mention that in discussing the Congo, the affairs of the Congo, we pointed out quite frankly our own opinions on the subject, and how the United Nations had not been allowed to function properly by not only people in the Congo, but people outside, great countries outside and their representatives in the Congo. The United Nations even now is in the extraordinary position of being condemned and criticised by various countries which are opposed to each other in world politics, but which, to some extent, agree in criticising the United Nations; or, if they do not criticise it, they act against the working of the United Nations in the Congo.

What the United Nations is doing in the Congo is itself a rather new adventure for the United Nations. If that fails, it will be a bad day certainly for the United Nations, and possibly for the world as a whole. If it succeeds, it will enhance the prestige of the United Nations, and make it clear that the kind of things that have happened in the Congo in the past cannot happen because there is this great world organisation to come and deal with it. So, it is a very important matter that the United Nations should succeed, and should succeed, of course, in the right way.

It was this consideration that led us to send our forces abroad. We did so with great reluctance, because, as the House knows, we have never done this kind of thing before. It was a novel enterprise, an enterprise full of difficulties and even risks, but because of this, and because of the fact that the resolution passed by the Security Council was one with which we agreed, we felt in honour bound to go to its support, and we have sent them.

Some of our troops have landed there, and some are on the way. I may point out, however, that even now there are all kinds of risks involved in this, and difficulties, because only recently one of the principal ports there, Matadi, was forcibly taken by some of the factional authorities in the Congo, by Mr. or Gen. Mobutu, I think. That is a serious matter for us and for our forces in the sense that the ships carrying supplies from India for the Congo have to go to that port, and if that port is not fully in the occupation of the U.N., there may be trouble; there may be difficulties in landing our people or our supplies. It is essential for a proper carrying out of the U.N.'s work there that the airports and the ports should be in their possession and under their control. We have pointed that out, and we are watching the situation very carefully.

We sent these forces naturally, if necessity arises, to take armed action,

but in the hope that this will not be necessary. They have gone there really on a mission of peace, and to help the U.N. in preserving order there, in establishing peace, and allowing the Congolese Parliament to meet, and then decide about its Government etc.

We have thus far not recognised any Government in the Congo. We have dealt with the authorities as they are. Most of these Governments in the Congo have appeared on the scene through some kind of *coup d'etat*, which hardly has any constitutional or legal basis. The only legal basis there was originally was to the Government of which Mr. Kasavubu was President and Mr. Lumumba was Prime Minister. Jointly, they had a certain basis. Singly, their powers were limited. Anyhow, with the assassination of Mr. Lumumba, and even before that, Mr. Kasavubu started functioning by himself as if he was the entire Government, which had no legal justification. Nevertheless, he was supported in this attitude, and was then taken into the United Nations as representing the Congo. It is not for me to criticise the United Nations General Assembly, but that was an unfortunate step that was taken then, and it resulted in unfortunate consequences. I think step by step it led to the deterioration of the position in the Congo.

Now, I believe that the crux of the question in the Congo is not so much armed forces, although they may be necessary, but the presence of the Belgians there, of Belgian mercenaries, or call them what you like, supporting some of those factions there, especially in Katanga province and in Leopoldville, Mobutu and some others. Right from the beginning, the United Nations have asked for the withdrawal of the Belgians. In spite of their demand some six months ago, they are still there, and they are in much larger numbers than they were ever before. It is true they withdrew to begin with, to some extent, but

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they came back rapidly thereafter, and not only came back, but sent arms, armoured cars, armour, and even, I believe, aircraft. Now, when I say "they", I do not mean to say that the Belgian Government did this, but chiefly Belgians and some other nationalities who did it. But I cannot myself understand how this can be done in a large way without the Belgian Government being aware of it, or conniving at it. They did not do it directly, but certainly they must have known about it, if not encouraged it. Large-scale recruitment took place to send these people, not only in Belgium, but elsewhere too, and at present we find thousands and thousands of Belgians even in the army, and of course in other capacities also. They have trained them, they have trained them in the use of modern weapons, and they have incited them, I believe, not to co-operate with the United Nations, but to work against it. That has been the chief difficulty. If the Belgians had not been there, if the Belgian and some other mercenaries had not been there, then the opposition to the United Nations on the part of these factional leaders would not have any effect or much effect.

It has come to this as appeared in a question asked today I think, one of the questions, that we have been challenged by, I think, Mr. Tshombe that if Indian forces go to Katanga, there will be war. Well, the Indian forces will do, within the ambit of their, whatever they are told to do by the U.N., subject to the conditions we have laid down. If it is necessary for us to go to Katanga, they will be sent there, and the threat of Mr. Tshombe will not deter them from going there, but the fact is that we do not, as far as possible, want to get entangled in these internal conflicts. There will be no reason for any internal conflicts at all if our advice, given six months ago, had been followed, that is, the summoning of the Congolese Parliament, and the Parlia-

ment deciding about their Government. I especially mentioned this in the General Assembly myself when I was there. It has been an extraordinary fact that in spite of this obvious way of dealing with the situation, this has not been adopted. Now I can understand Mr. Mobutu not adopting it. Mr. Mobutu was the outcome of a *coup d'etat*, he has no legal position. But the surprising part is that great and important powers have encouraged Mr. Mobutu, Mr. Tshombe and Mr. Kasavubu in maintaining an attitude of this kind which was directly opposed to what the United Nations was going to do. Now, it is surprising that some of these gentlemen, Mr. Mobutu and others, do not like the idea of Indian forces going there.

It may be remembered that when Mr. Lumumba was assassinated and brutally killed, many charges were made against these very leaders, the local leaders, of having been involved in this murder. And, the Security Council Resolution of the 21st February specially lays down that an inquiry should be held—investigations should be held—into Lumumba's murder. If such an inquiry is held, it is possible that it may not come out to the advantage of some people and authorities in the Congo today. And, if they dislike any such inquiry or any shift in power in the Congo, it is not surprising. So, the conditions there are rather complicated. But, essentially, they are complicated because of foreign intervention; and the foreign intervention, in the main, has been of Belgians.

Originally, 6 or 7 months ago, some other countries also came in. The Soviet Union sent some people, I think about 500 or so, not soldiers but they were supposed to be technicians. I do not know if there were a few military officers or not; but, they were mostly technicians. Anyhow, they sent them; but they did not remain there long because of the

Mobutu coup d'etat taking place. He had sent them all back so that, in the past 6 months or so, there has been no one from the Soviet Union or any of their allied countries there as they have not been allowed there. That disposes of—whatever they may do outside Congo—any charge of their having done anything in the last 6 months in the Congo itself because they are simply not there—whatever their intentions might have been previously. But those who are there, the representatives of powers who are there, have a certain responsibility for these conditions; and I regret to say that they have not functioned rightly or in aid of the United Nations. Even though their governments support the United Nations, their representatives in the Congo have worked with different aims, which is very surprising and even indulged in some kind of campaign against India. And it is this really that encourages those elements like Mr. Mobutu, Mr. Tshombe and others to take up these strong attitudes.

This is what the Security Council Resolution says in its very first paragraph that the Belgian withdrawal is essential before any improvement can take place. If the Belgians withdraw, not only their armed and para-military forces, but individuals or their political advisers also, then the situation changes immediately. Then the whole strength and background of these elements there which are opposing the U.N. weakens; and I do not personally think any need arises then for strong military action. Petty action there might be. That is in regard to the Congo which was considered at some length.

Going back to South Africa, may I remind this House, that it is almost exactly 50 years ago that Mahatma Gandhi started his first campaign in South Africa against racial discrimination? This was in 1911; about the middle of the year. And this fact

was before me all this time and I reminded the Prime Minister of South Africa about this.

Therefore, if I may add about the Congo, as I have said, the Belgian withdrawal is the most important. How is that to be brought about? Obviously, we do not want this to be a warlike measure, forcible. But Belgium is an ally of many countries like the United States and the United Kingdom and other countries. And, I am quite sure, if these great powers wanted to and were keen about it, they could bring adequate pressure on Belgium to withdraw its people from there. I know, to some extent, that has been done; and the reply of the Belgian Government has been that these people who have gone there have not gone on their behalf; they are adventurers not under their control. Possibly, it might be true to some extent in regard to a few persons who formed foreign legions and the like. But I find it difficult to believe that the Belgian Government cannot exercise its authority on a large number of its nationals who go abroad and create these international situations. I trust, therefore, that these great powers, the allies of Belgium or Belgium will exercise their authority and will bring pressure to bear on the Belgian Government and on the Belgians to withdraw from the Congo, because until that withdrawal takes place there will be no peace in the Congo. --

In the last 6 months attempts were made somehow to consolidate these people, Kasavubu, Mobutu and Tshombe etc. They have failed simply because they have really no popular backing. And, this habit of trying to put up people without any popular backing, with external help, may succeed for a while but does not succeed in the long run.

I come to the third important point considered by us. That is disarmament. Now, in regard to disarmament, there is an Appendix attached

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to this final Communique on Disarmament. If the Members have examined the various proposals for disarmament put up before the United Nations or the Disarmament Conference, proposals by the Soviet Union, the U.K. and the U.S.A. Governments, by the Canadian Government, by India and 10 other countries which is called the Eleven Power Resolution, if you read them fairly rapidly, you will feel that there is a very great deal of agreement in all these proposals. And yet the fact is that agreement has been lacking because somewhere or other, in so-called minor matters, there is so much disagreement—minor or major matters—and agreement escapes us.

Anyhow, after careful consideration and consultation, we had put forward a Resolution in the U.N. in common with ten others, called the Eleven Power Resolution. We hold by it still, though it is not a solution of the problem. It is the approach to the problem laying down certain principles and hoping that, if an advance is made on these lines, an agreement will, probably, come. Ultimately, an agreement on this matter depends, primarily, on two countries, the United States of America and the Soviet Union. If they agree, then the others will probably fall in line. I do not ignore the others because all of us are interested. I do not accept the proposition that if the United States and the Soviet Union agree, all of us must necessarily agree I mean all the countries of the world. But the fact is in this matter it is they who count principally in this stage of the world's history and therefore, we have always suggested that they should discuss this matter among themselves and find some way of agreement. The others will come in later. There has been some talk of a larger disarmament conference and larger committees. India's name has been mentioned. Well, India has played a fairly important part in the UN in regard to disarmament discussions.

Our part has always been not a destructive one of criticising or condemning but trying to put forward constructive proposals and even the proposal we have put forward with ten other countries was one which was largely agreed to, I believe I am correct in saying so, by the other powers concerned, like the United States and the Soviet Union. They did not wholly agree with it here or there but they were not totally opposed to it in any vital matter. So, we discussed this disarmament matter and the proposals—you may call them resolutions or proposals are given in the appendix to the communique. They are not the same as our resolution but they are not in conflict with it and partly they cover the same ground because our resolution goes into much greater detail and I think what the Commonwealth has said in this is a good approach in so far as it goes and it is to be worked out a little more. One can go into the details in this resolution. But because we want principal countries to come to an agreement, if we make a rigid approach, it makes it difficult for these countries to come together. I hope that the two super powers, as they are called, will come together on this basis.

We know that there has been a change of administration in the United States and the old rigidity has gone and they are making every effort to have a common approach in regard to many matters including disarmament to which, I believe, President Kennedy attaches great importance. We know also that the Soviet Union has been exceedingly anxious to get some agreement on disarmament. If there is this anxiety on both sides, it should not be too difficult to find some way out and some agreement.

But I should like to make one thing clear. Disarmament today must aim at complete disarmament. The talk of partial disarmament today is almost out of date. That does not mean

that complete disarmament will take place overnight; it has to be phased but that is a different matter. That has to be phased and we have to go step by step. But any partial disarmament does not put an end to the tensions and fears that exist today. If we reduce, let us say, the number of nuclear bombs—you give fifty per cent less; there is, suppose, a fifty per cent disarmament in regard to nuclear weapons—the dangers of nuclear warfare still remain. Instead of, let us say, 1000 bombs, each will have 500 and the dangers remain and the fears remain and they can be manufactured rapidly again.

Therefore, one must aim at complete disarmament and that is a very big thing and it has powerful reactions. It will apply of course to conventional weapons as well as nuclear weapons. The House knows that for some 3½ years past, a committee of scientists has been sitting in Geneva, I think, considering the banning of nuclear tests. There is strong hope now that in the course of the next few weeks, they may come to an agreement. Anyhow, every effort is being made to come to an agreement and if that is done, it will not only be a good thing in itself but it will help in changing the tensions of the world and reducing them and improving the whole international atmosphere. So, let us hope that this will happen.

Apart from these matters, there are some other matters considered by the Commonwealth Conference. There were some domestic matters. Cyprus was taken in as a Member and that was to be welcomed, because there has been bitter war in Cyprus for many years and the ending of it in a friendly and co-operative way was a good thing. The President of Cyprus later joined the conference. Another member, not now but in the next five week's time, would be Sierra Leone.

13 hrs.

Finally, one other subject was discussed—Laos and Indo-China, where the situation continues to be critical. Recently one leader of Laos, Prince Souvanna Phouma was here and we had some talks and some proposals have been made. There is some reference to them in today's papers. Some proposals were made by the UK Government with the concurrence, I believe, of the United States. Now, the UK and the Soviet Union have a particular place in this matter because they are the two co-chairmen of the old Geneva Conference. We, India, which was the Chairman of the International Commission in Indo-China, have to get our constructions from the two Co-Chairmen. If the two Co-Chairmen ask us to do something, that is our authority for doing it. Long ago, we suggested that there should be a revival of the Commission in Laos; it had been suspended about two or three years ago. Mostly, they did not agree but gradually they have been coming round to that. This proposal was made for a conference after the pattern of the old Geneva Conference. This was made by Cambodia and later on supported by the Soviet Union. Now, the proposals that the U.K. Government made appear to be very near the proposals made by the Soviet Government—not precisely the same, but they have suggested a meeting of the Commission first and then of the conference too, after that. All this is dependent on the immediate and early cease fire. This has been communicated, I believe, to the Soviet Government and if they also agree with this, then presumably, they will ask India to take action about convening the Commission and we shall, in that event, do so, probably, to begin with, in Delhi itself but later the Commission will have to go to Laos and at some time later, probably, the international conference meet, at some place and time which have not been fixed yet. I hope that these efforts would meet

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with success and the fighting there will end and there will be a cease fire. It must be remembered that the whole basis of the Geneva agreement was that the countries in Indo-China must not join any military bloc and must be more or less neutral because the moment they try to do so, the other side came into the picture and challenged it. This applies to Laos. And the difficulty in Laos has been the attempt of various sides to push them or to pull them into some kind of policy which is more allied to one or of the policies or military blocs on either side, and that has led to fighting there. The only solution of Laos can be that Laos should be what is called the "neutral country—I do not like the word "neutral" as applied to India, I reject it, but so far as Laos is concerned that would be a correct description—in which the various parties or groups are represented in the Government and they follow a policy of not committing themselves to any of these military alliances. Unless that is aimed at I do not think there will be any solution. That is what Prince Souvanna Phouma who came here stood for. He was Prime Minister sometime, but ultimately he was more or less pushed out by other developments and by these different pulls by different military factions, one on one side and another on the other side. As soon as that happens arms come in from outside. There have been plenty of arms coming in from both sides of these military blocs, and that makes the situation very serious. One of the things that should happen for the cease fire is stoppage of arms coming in from outside, from both sides of the conflicting parties.

Sir, I am sorry to have taken so much time to deal with this matter. Now, I shall hand over this paper to the Table. [See Appendix IV, annexure No. 5].

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Ferozabad): Sir, may we be allowed to have some

clarification from the hon. Prime Minister?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members will have ample opportunity when we have the debate on External Affairs. They will read the statement in detail and clear up all their doubts then.

13.03 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

REPORT OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION TO THE 17TH SESSIONS OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Satish Chandra): Sir, on behalf of Shri Kanugo, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Report of the Indian Delegation to the 17th Session of the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade held in Geneva from the 31st October to the 19th November, 1960. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2769/61].

REHABILITATION INDUSTRIES CORPORATION

The Minister of Industry (Shri Manubhai Shah): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers:—

- (i) (a) Annual Report of the Rehabilitation Industries Corporation Limited for the year 1959-60 along with the Audited Accounts and the Comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, under sub-section (1) of Section 639 of the Companies Act, 1956.
- (b) Simplified Annual Accounts of the above Corporation for the year 1959-60.
- (c) Review by the Government on the working of the above Corporation. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2770/61.]