



BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to send my best wishes to everyone attending the celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of the first Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference. Governor General Edward Schreyer deserves great credit for his initiative.

It so happens that the formula for the first Commonwealth Study Conference in 1956 was based on my experiences during a tour of Northern Canada after the Commonwealth Games in Vancouver in 1954. The traditional method for governing towns and cities is through elected councils, but, in order to develop new resources in remote regions, companies had to build towns for their workers, and to manage them. Their problem was when and how to transfer responsibility to the citizens.

This turned out to be just one of the dilemmas facing both growing and declining industrial communities. From this emerged the concept that getting people from all sectors of the community to witness these issues personally, and to discuss them together might prove to be beneficial for future decision-makers. Fifty years, and ten Commonwealth Conferences later, it would appear that the formula was a good one.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Governor General Michaëlle Jean and Richard George on the organisation of the 2008 Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference, and for including an invitation to participants of previous Conferences to meet together to mark this 25th anniversary.