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23 Lynton Road,
KLOOF,
Natal, South Africa.

9th February, 1961.

The Editor,
THE OBSERVER,
LONDON.

Sir,

The OBSERVER of February 5 urged the members of the Commonwealth to expel South Africa from membership, and said that the demand for exclusion had come from all African and Asian leaders in the Union, as well as from leading white Liberals such as myself.

Allow me to state clearly the views of the Liberal Party of South Africa in regard to membership of the Commonwealth. The Party has always been an unequivocal supporter of the Commonwealth. It regarded the recent referendum on the question of republican status as invalid, in that 80% of adult persons were excluded from voting on the grounds of race and colour, while the white voters of Southwest-Africa, which is not a part of the country, were allowed to participate.

Nevertheless the Party has never demanded that South Africa should be expelled. Some loyal South Africans (I mean loyal in our opinion) take the view that our membership keeps us in the company and under the influence of sensible and level-headed nations, who will hold back our Government from committing the worst excesses. Others consider that our membership has been powerless in preventing excesses, and that we should be expelled so that our Government can be taught a lesson, and made to feel the pinch of isolation, an experience which it is hoped may bring our rulers back to the path of reason and moderation, or persuade the voters to exchange them for others.

The official view of the Party is that the white electorate has, albeit by a narrow majority, made a choice which it considers to be in its own interests, and that now it is the duty of the peoples and leaders of the other member countries to make a choice which they consider to be in the interests of the Commonwealth. The Party does not demand any particular decision, but considers that this choice must be determined by one consideration and one alone, namely the continuance of the Commonwealth as a force for peace and order in an unsettled

world. Will the inclusion of South Africa assist or endanger the realisation of this ideal? That is the only question.

I myself made one point in London at the Annual General Meeting of Christian Action, on November 28 at Church House, namely that the Commonwealth was too important an instrument of order and peace to be used merely as a stick for beating South Africa. The people of Britain should rather ask themselves the question, will the unity and solidarity of the Commonwealth be endangered, now or in the future, by keeping South Africa in membership. The last thirteen years of our history deserve the most careful study.

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