

INTRODUCTION

The developmental requirements of modern times have made ever-increasing demands on the educational systems of Commonwealth countries, both in terms of the number of people to be educated and the ever-widening range of knowledge that people need to possess. A growing realization that traditional processes of instruction were inadequate to meet these demands led to the decision to hold a Commonwealth Conference on Materials for Learning and Teaching at Wellington, New Zealand, from 22 September to 3 October 1975.

One of the matters emphasized at the Conference was that educational materials are not important in themselves unless they are an integral part of the curriculum. Another was that countries desiring any form of social change should ensure that all agencies of change, including education, worked in close collaboration, and that governments should allocate sufficient resources to enable the changes to be implemented. A third - and certainly the most significant in day-to-day classroom terms - was that of the importance of teacher-made materials, even in those countries that can afford to provide a wide range of commercial equipment for schools. Examples of materials made by teachers, and by pupils, were among the most impressive features of the display that formed the first item on the conference agenda. One of the most valuable services that education officers and inspectors can perform is that of encouraging teachers to prepare their own teaching aids and of carrying news about the best of them from school to school.

Identifying ways of Commonwealth co-operation is always one of the objectives of Commonwealth conferences. This Conference has made a number of important recommendations affecting education authorities and governments as well as the Commonwealth Secretariat, and it is hoped that these recommendations will result in practical programmes and projects that will assist Commonwealth countries in making their educational programmes more effective.

The Commonwealth Secretariat wishes to acknowledge its gratitude to the Government of New Zealand for making the arrangements for the conference and to all those who contributed to the conference and offered hospitality to the delegates. Special thanks are due to members of the working party, to the Co-Secretary of the conference (Mr P. R. Miles), and the Administration Secretary (Mr W. S. Edginton) as well as to other staff seconded by the New Zealand Government.