

INTRODUCTION

The number of conferences on education that have taken place in recent years is staggering. Not a month passes without a national, regional or international conference on some aspect of education, not to mention seminars, symposia and workshops. As long as educational problems persist conferences will continue to be held to ensure a meeting of minds and to facilitate the exchange of ideas which will lead to the solution of such problems. But to contribute to the solution of problems conferences should result not only in reports but also in realistic recommendations.

The Nairobi Conference on Teacher Education in a Changing Society, of which this is the final Report, has tried to do this. The Conference recognised the key role of the teacher in the development of every aspect of education. There has been of recent so much talk about education in the rural areas, the need for curriculum reform, education and employment, education for social and economic change, life long education and so on, but it is not always realised or adequately emphasized that unless the teacher is involved in the planning and development of these educational ideas not much progress can be made. Emphasis at Nairobi was therefore on the need to review and modernise the methods of training teachers so that, to quote from the Report of the International Commission on the Development of Education, teachers can "become educators rather than specialists in transmitting pre-established curricula".

Attention is particularly drawn to pages 7 to 17 which contain a summary of the main issues discussed at the Conference as well as proposals for action. The success of the Conference will depend ultimately upon the extent to which the proposals and recommendations in this Report are put into action. These recommendations cover the quantitative and qualitative aspects of teacher education; they give thought to topics like the training and employment of para-professional personnel, the use of new methods and techniques in teaching, in-service teacher education programmes, training the teacher educator, and the planning and financing of education.

It will be observed that the proposals for action are addressed to various bodies as well as to Governments. For any country to make a success of its teacher education programme the Government, teachers' organisations, teacher education institutions, universities, and teachers as individuals must be involved. National efforts must be supplemented where possible by regional and international programmes of co-operation. The Commonwealth Secretariat has already started work on those parts of the recommendations in which it can contribute best, for example the collection, collation and dissemination of information and research into teacher education problems. We trust that this Report will contribute to the general improvement of teacher education programmes throughout the Commonwealth.