

Foreword

One reason why many developing countries show great readiness to spend a large proportion of their annual budget on education is that they hope educational expansion will eventually lead to a greater supply of manpower for national development. Over the years, many developing countries have experienced disappointment in the outcome of their educational programmes. In no field is this disappointment more acutely felt than in the field of technical education.

At the Fifth Commonwealth Education Conference many delegates referred to an acute shortage of trained technicians and other middle-level workers in their countries. While so much is spent on expanding and improving technical education, countries continue to rely heavily on expatriate technicians to support their industries. One of the recommendations of that conference was that the Commonwealth Secretariat should examine the problems of technician education and see how they could be solved through Commonwealth co-operation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has already initiated a number of projects. It has, among other things, tried to determine the cause of the low status of technicians in many countries and made surveys of the progress of technician training in a number of countries in two regions, and it is preparing to make further surveys in this field.

It will be recalled that a specialist Commonwealth conference on technician training was held in Huddersfield in 1966. Many useful recommendations emerged, and the conference report contained many useful suggestions and much information which ought to be brought, once again, to the notice of everyone interested in technician education. Much of the material, however, is out of date and it was felt that the issues raised should be reviewed and presented anew, to ensure that the latest approaches and thinking are incorporated.

We have been fortunate in obtaining the services of Mr Alexander MacLennan to undertake this task. This volume is the result of many months of hard work which Mr MacLennan has put into the assignment which the Commonwealth Secretariat gave him. He has indicated in the introduction to the book some of the considerations which have guided him in his approach to the work.

Mr MacLennan has the academic qualifications, background and experience for this assignment. From 1946-1974 he was Director of the Huddersfield Technical Teachers Training College – College of Education (Technical) after 1964 – and he in fact took part in the 1966 conference on technician edu-

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cation, both as a member of the British delegation and as the host to the conference which was held in his college. Moreover, Mr MacLennan has vast experience of technical education problems in most countries of the Commonwealth. He has advised a number of ministries in developing countries on technical teacher training, technical curriculum planning and development and technical college management. I have no doubt that for many years to come, in spite of his retirement, Mr MacLennan's advice in this field will continue to be sought by many countries.

The Commonwealth Secretariat deeply appreciates the conscientious work which has resulted in this publication, which we sincerely hope will make some significant contribution to technical education programmes and projects, especially in the developing countries of the Commonwealth.

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