

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN

This report has been compiled from material supplied by the Commonwealth Scholarship agencies. Every year agencies are sent a questionnaire, and most of them answer all the relevant questions and make general statements about the administration of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan in their countries. Their statements about how the Plan worked last year are presented in the Summary on the following pages with the minimum of editing. Some agencies, though they have provided statistics and other relevant information, have not made any comments for publication in the Summary. A few agencies, unfortunately, have not made any contribution at all to this Report.

Most agencies, whether reporting from the standpoint of a nominating or of an awarding country, said they were satisfied with the working of the Plan. There were favourable comments from awarding countries on the academic standards of award-holders, and several nominating countries reported that Scholars took up appropriate appointments of benefit to the community on their return home. Concern has however been expressed by some that the number of awards ultimately made did not always match the number originally said to be available.

As forecast in the Twenty-third Annual Report there was a substantial rise in the number of awards taken up in Britain as a result of the increased allocation of funds by the British Government. It was gratifying to read in Sierra Leone's report about the arrival of its first Commonwealth Scholar. The Indian agency has announced that there is to be an increase in the number of awards on offer in 1985-86. Participants in the Plan look forward to hearing of further expansion in Plan activities in countries which are able to offer study facilities.

The Plan remains primarily concerned with postgraduate education, though some countries would welcome more undergraduate awards and even provision for certain types of non-academic education. Some agencies reported that at their present stage of development they did not make use of the Plan at all and did not feel they were likely to be able to do so for many years to come.

It was disappointing to a few agencies that the candidates they had so carefully chosen failed to receive awards, and there was a suggestion that the criteria for selection in one country were too "rigid".

Attention was drawn by nominating countries to the need to have details of the awards on offer as far in advance as possible. Awarding countries reminded agencies that the application papers of candidates should be despatched to them complete and in good time if they were to carry out their work satisfactorily. It was also important for agencies to ensure that only those candidates who were fully eligible were put forward for consideration. In spite of administrative difficulties the lists in the Appendices show that a total of 527 new Commonwealth Scholars and of 131 senior award holders began their studies in 1983-84. No doubt the general feeling that there are not enough awards is a good measure of the Commonwealth's regard for the Plan.

Finally, the editors wish to acknowledge with very many thanks the considerable efforts of the agencies to make the publication of this Report possible.