

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN

Awards under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan were designed for men and women of high intellectual promise who might be expected to make a significant contribution to life in their own countries on their return from study abroad. Year after year evidence accumulates of the high attainments of scholars in their studies and of the resulting benefits to their communities on their return home. The tracer study of former Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows which was initiated by officials at the Conference of Education Ministers in Nicosia should further illuminate the role of the Plan in helping young men and women in the Commonwealth make the very best use of their ability.

The Summary which follows shows that the agencies of the Plan share the conviction that expansion should be accorded a high priority. Resolutions made at the Nicosia conference have been put into effect and a total of 1,727 awards of scholarships and fellowships including 806 new awards were made available during the year. The number of scholars and fellows sponsored by Britain rose to over 900. Canada reported substantial progress towards reaching its target of 500 scholars on award and also every prospect that by next year its entire quota would be filled. India has been steadily building up its intake, and Trinidad has initiated three additional awards for postgraduate study. There is still, however scope for further expansion. Nigeria had made available four awards and Sierra Leone three, but unfortunately not all these scholarships have been used. Nigeria has appealed to its fellow members of the Commonwealth to give the fullest possible publicity to the awards it has to offer.

Yet though there has been a gratifying increase in the total number of award-holders, the Plan continues to benefit far more men than women, with women being outnumbered as beneficiaries by about four to one. Canada in particular has expressed its concern, and when writing to agencies to invite them to nominate candidates has underlined its determination to promote the greater participation of women. It is noteworthy that St. Vincent nominated equal numbers of men and women for the year's awards.

Awarding countries are concerned to attract enough good candidates, to select the best ones as early as possible, and to place them in universities rapidly and appropriately. Closing dates are chosen to give adequate, though never generous, time for all the stages to be completed efficiently. The importance of nominating agencies despatching their application papers on time and in good order cannot be over-emphasised. Canada has pointed out that even when they have already been provisionally selected for awards, candidates risk being refused admission by universities if their application forms lack certain documents. Agency officials should need no reminding that their Administrative Handbook, now in its Fourth Edition, is an indispensable guide to procedure.

Agency staff cannot meet regularly in person, but every year the pages of this Report provide the equivalent of a meeting place. Most agencies, including some in countries which get scant benefit from the Plan, invariably make their contributions, but there are other agencies in countries whose citizens make considerable use of the opportunities offered, who ignore

requests for facts or figures. The editors hope that every agency participating in the Plan will make it a practice to contribute to the Annual Report.

In conclusion the editors wish to record on behalf of all concerned in the Plan their appreciation of the distinguished service of Mr E E Temple whose retirement as Joint Secretary of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom has been reported by the British agency. His administrative skills have fostered not only the work of the Commission in Britain, but also, ever since its inception, the work of the Plan as a whole. It is largely through the efforts of Mr Temple that the Plan, which has no central direction, operates within the sound administrative framework without which its success would not have been possible.