

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN

Every year agencies are invited to report on the working of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan in their countries. Reports may relate to any aspect of the progress of the Plan, but agencies are particularly asked to draw attention to any changes which may have occurred in administrative procedures or in existing programmes during the past year, and to put forward their views on how the Plan might be adapted to accord more closely with national needs. Views on the value of the Plan are usually based on many years' experience and do not change markedly from year to year.

The statements on the following pages have been presented with the minimum of editing. They are so diverse that it would be difficult if not impossible to summarise them fairly in these few introductory paragraphs. Instead, a selection has been made of some of the agencies' comments which it is hoped may be of general interest.

The awarding agencies reported little change in the number of awards made in the year 1982/83, but Britain expected a substantial rise in its awards in the year to come. Australia drew attention to the increasing need for substantial extensions of awards by their postgraduate scholars. Mention was made by both Canada and Britain of successful regional meetings which had been held to help maintain direct personal contact with award-holders. New Zealand referred to the problems of accommodation for married scholars and underlined its advice that scholars should come on their own initially and arrange for their families to join them only when they had found suitable accommodation. No doubt married scholars, whatever their destination, would be wise to heed this advice. It appeared that there had been a disappointing under-use of the awards on offer by India and Nigeria, and Nigeria's report included a plea to nominating agencies to advertise the awards on offer as widely as possible.

Not for the first time nominating agencies were asked to ensure that their applications were despatched in good order and in time to meet the awarding countries' deadlines. Candidates whose papers arrived late or incomplete were clearly at a considerable disadvantage.

Most of the reports written from the standpoint of nominating countries reflected satisfaction with the working of the Plan, and there were several references to the worthwhile contribution scholars were making on their return home from their studies. Bermuda and Montserrat, for example, provided information about the appointments their scholars had taken up on completion of their awards. There seems to be no doubt that the Plan has been of widespread benefit.

But there was some criticism; the outcome of their nominations was clearly a matter for concern to certain agencies, whether from failure to secure even one award or because the number of awards obtained fell well below expectation. As in previous years, there were pleas for greater emphasis in the Plan on undergraduate awards and also suggestions that there should be scope for professional and technical training. Kiribati confirmed its support for the "concept of third country awards and the quota system".

In conclusion the editors wish to say that they are fully aware of the amount of work involved in compiling facts and figures for this report and are most grateful to the agencies for their co-operation.