

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN

Twenty five years after the Oxford Conference when the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan was inaugurated, the ninth conference in the series with the new title of Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers met in Nicosia, Cyprus, in July 1984. The continued achievements of the Plan were warmly acknowledged and, in the light of the recommendations of the Second Ten Year Review Committee, there was a call for further expansion to meet current and future needs of Commonwealth countries and their students.

The response was a gratifying one. Australia, Ghana, India, Malta, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Trinidad and Tobago announced an intention to offer more awards, and the Bahamas, Guyana, Kenya, Papua New Guinea and Zimbabwe undertook to become awarding countries for the first time. But the most substantial offer came from Canada which announced that the number of awards to be funded each year was set to rise from 300 to 500. In view of this response, which was warmly welcomed, and the extra awards already made by Britain the total number of awards of all kinds available under the Plan was expected to reach 1,700.

Few specific references to the proceedings in Cyprus are to be found in the statements made by individual agencies which are printed on the pages which follow. However it will be noted that Canada has confirmed the provision of an extra 200 awards and in this connection has reported that twice the usual number of nominations has been sought and obtained this year. India refers to an increase of 25 in the number of her awards, and Sierra Leone which only recently joined the awarding countries is to give a second scholarship. Nigeria has reported that it intends to raise the number of its awards to 22.

The information received for this report generally reflects satisfaction at the working of the Plan and appreciation of the benefits it has brought both to nominating and awarding countries, though some feel that their own special needs are not adequately met in all cases.

It continues to be a matter for concern that the efforts of awarding countries are hampered because some sets of application papers arrive late or without essential documents like references and academic transcripts. Selectors cannot make good judgements nor can universities even consider whether to admit candidates unless they have full information about them. The "Administrative Handbook of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan", is issued from time to time as a guide to current established practice in the administration of the Plan for officials in the various Commonwealth countries who together share responsibility for the smooth running of the scheme. At the Conference in Cyprus all participating countries were urged to heed its provisions closely.

Finally the editors wish to say how grateful they are to the agencies which have provided facts and figures for this report, and look forward to their continued co-operation.