

Membership in the Commonwealth is one of the fundamental aspects of Canadian foreign policy. Canada has supported the extension and development of a strong Commonwealth, capable of exerting significant influence for international peace and progress. Commonwealth ties give Canada a special relationship with this group of nations which, despite the diversity of their backgrounds, share important ideals and traditions in common. Commonwealth ties are characterized in the main by a spirit of co-operation developed through consultation and exchange of views. These are continuous not only in Commonwealth capitals but in other countries, and also at United Nations and other international gatherings.

In addition to these continuing exchanges at many levels, special meetings are convened for the purpose of discussing and co-ordinating the interests of Commonwealth members in various special fields, and to review international developments in the Commonwealth context. Two meetings of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers and Presidents) took place in 1966. The first was held in Lagos, Nigeria, in January to discuss Rhodesia and the second was held in London in September when discussions covered a wide range of international affairs. Other Ministerial meetings included the Law Ministers in London in April, the Trade Ministers in the same city in May and the Finance Ministers in Montreal in September. The Commonwealth Foundation, a semi-autonomous body financed by Commonwealth governments, came into being in 1966 with the aim of promoting contacts between professional persons within the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association met in Ottawa in September.

Canada's external aid for developing countries continued to be directed, in the main, to Commonwealth countries through the Colombo Plan, the Special Commonwealth Africa Assistance Plan (SCAAP), and the Canadian program for Commonwealth Caribbean assistance. Canada's total contribution under the Colombo Plan since its inception exceeds \$800,000,000. Canada aided Commonwealth countries in Africa through SCAAP to a total of \$56,500,000 for the period from 1960 to the end of March 1967. Approximately \$44,000,000 was made available for aid and technical assistance to Commonwealth Caribbean countries from 1958 to the end of March 1967.

Canada is an active participant in the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (see also p. 186) and during the 1966-67 academic year received the full quota of 250 students under this Plan, 78 p.c. of them from the developing countries; 70 Canadian students continued their higher education in other Commonwealth countries. Canada is also playing a significant part in the training and provision of teachers for service in Commonwealth countries and assisting in plans for co-operation in technical education. During the academic year 1966-67, there were 665 Canadian teachers and university professors serving under Canadian Government aid programs in the less-developed countries of Southeast Asia, Africa and the Caribbean area, a very substantial proportion of them in Commonwealth countries.

### Subsection 2.—Francophonie

Heir to the great traditions of the French language and culture, Canada is also contributing fully to the establishment of special links between francophone countries. Its bilateral relations with France have developed greatly in recent years through political consultations, parliamentary visits, cultural and scientific exchanges, increased trade, officer exchanges, defence production co-operation, and the like. Links with other French-speaking countries have also been strengthened by the establishment of diplomatic missions and developing exchanges in a number of fields. A growing proportion of Canadian economic aid has been directed to francophone countries in Africa (see p. 186). Canada is taking part in current endeavours to develop multilateral co-operation between French-speaking countries, a policy based on the recognition of the value to Canada of its ties with a multi-racial community of some 30 countries with 150,000,000 inhabitants, linked together by French culture.