

budget and arm of the Commonwealth Secretariat, making possible the mobilization of human resources and facilities from any part of the Commonwealth to help meet the development needs of its members. It has greatly expanded the use of the association for mutual self-help. About half of the experts on assignment to developing countries are recruited from other developing countries. Often their background experience is particularly relevant.

General technical assistance is provided in a remarkable range of fields, including such sensitive areas as constitutional questions, social policy, law reform, legislative drafting, fiscal planning and international negotiations. The Secretariat has perhaps the most experienced team in the world in the vitally important and sensitive area of resource development and negotiations with multinational corporations. Its services have helped developing countries to the tune of many hundreds of millions of dollars.

Operational experts are also provided in special cases — for example, a Singapore director-general of the new Fiji Ports Authority, a high court judge from Africa for Papua New Guinea, a distinguished Trinidadian educationalist as Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific.

Under another CFTC program, the Secretariat organizes and finances training, sometimes through formal university courses but often through in-service attachments, study tours, and specialized technical courses, for students or officials from developing countries in other developing countries. And the Export Market Development Program is used to help developing countries earn more foreign exchange for themselves, through market research, design, participation in trade fairs, and other promotional activities.

The idea of development assistance on a multilateral Commonwealth basis was inherent from the beginning in the establishment of a Secretariat, and the developing countries (as well as the Secretary-General!) pressed hard for its realization. It was, however, five years after 1965 before any of the richer members would agree to support it. The argument they made against it was not that it would cost money but that it would involve "duplication". Since its establishment, however, it has done well, and not only requests for CFTC services but the voluntary contributions to its resources from industrialized and developing countries alike have been snowballing. Canada, Britain and Nigeria are the three largest contributors, and New Zealand is by far the largest con-

tributor *per capita*. All member countries, and the governments of several dependent territories, now contribute.

The Fund is still extremely small in comparison with other multilateral funds, such as those of the EEC or the oil-producers or the UN, but it has been approximately doubling each year. It is about \$10 million for the current year. Its reputation for speed of response, flexibility and quality is outstanding. Its administrative overhead is about 12 per cent, compared to an average of 30 per cent or more for most aid agencies. It shows what scope there is for down-to-earth, practical, mutual help in a group such as the Commonwealth. In my judgment, continued rapid expansion would make good sense, developmentally and in terms of basic political strategy. I have always believed that the health of the Commonwealth, and therefore its value to its members, depends on the extent to which it is constructively used.

The Commonwealth Youth Program is an even more recent activity administered by the Secretariat. It was established by heads of government meeting in Ottawa in August 1973 on the recommendation of a conference earlier that year in Lusaka of Commonwealth ministers (variously of education, youth, labour, sports and social services, plus Senator Paul Martin of Canada). It grew out of a series of regional studies and seminars that the Secretariat had organized, at the suggestion of Harold Wilson, on youth problems, especially those of unemployed school-leavers.

One of the key activities under this program is in the recent establishment of three training centres, located in Zambia, Guyana and India, for the advanced training of youth leaders, concentrating on methods of equipping and helping young people to participate constructively in community and national development. The resources, about \$1 million a year for the first three years, are small but the field is challenging and vital.

Food initiative

Commonwealth delegates at the World Food Congress in Rome a year ago, disappointed at the slow progress that was perhaps inevitable on the world-wide front, asked the Commonwealth Secretariat to convene an early meeting of Commonwealth ministers responsible for food production and rural development. This took place in March 1975. The Secretariat has now been charged with establishing a new program of Commonwealth co-operation in this area, which is so crucial to survival.

*Constructive use
regulates
Commonwealth's
state of health*