

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, July 3, 1959

The house met at 11 a.m.

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS

ANNOUNCEMENT RESPECTING SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Hon. Howard C. Green (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the right hon. Prime Minister announced in the house on March 24, a commonwealth education conference is to be held at Oxford from July 15th to the 29th. The Canadian delegation to the conference will be led by Hon. George A. Drew and will include representatives of the university community and officials. The detailed list of delegates is being released to the press later today.

The house will recall that at the commonwealth trade and economic conference in Montreal last September consideration was given to various ways in which the commonwealth could be strengthened through increased co-operation in the field of trade and economic relations generally. One of the problems which received particular attention at that time was how we could help our less developed partners in the commonwealth to carry forward their economic development programs to the point where they would be able to achieve self-sustaining economic growth.

I need not reiterate today the steps taken by the Canadian government at that time to expand our economic and technical assistance to the underdeveloped countries and territories of the commonwealth. I do want to remind the house, however, that it was recognized at Montreal that apart from capital and technical knowledge, education in its broadest sense also had a vital part to play in the process of economic development. It was also recognized that our expanding commonwealth called for a continuing community of experience and values which a wider sharing of educational opportunities and facilities was best able to assure.

It was decided, therefore, at Montreal to bring into being a commonwealth scholarship program under which some thousand scholars would, in due course, have the opportunity of studying in countries other than their own. Canada undertook to be responsible for one-quarter of the total places

to be provided under the program, and the United Kingdom for one-half. It was agreed that the detailed formulation of this scholarship program should be left to be worked out at the conference which is being held at Oxford later this month.

It was also decided at Montreal that the mandate of this conference should include a review of existing arrangements for commonwealth co-operation in the educational field. The house will appreciate that this is a very wide and complex mandate and the present intention, therefore, is to concentrate on two matters which are known to be of particular concern to the underdeveloped countries and territories of the commonwealth, the supply and training of teachers, and facilities for technical and scientific education.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that these are fields in which Canada is prepared to provide a greater measure of assistance within the framework of our existing technical assistance programs. As the house is aware, these now encompass all the less developed areas of the commonwealth, and there is thus no need for Canada to set up new programs for dealing with these problems.

There is perhaps a further word I should say about the Commonwealth scholarship program. In the view of the Canadian government the awards to be made under the program should be such as to attract men and women of high intellectual competence who are able to benefit from a period of study abroad and who may be expected to make a worth-while contribution to the national life of their own countries and to the commonwealth association as such. It is the view of the Canadian government that in such an interchange each commonwealth country has something to give and something to gain. I am glad to be able to assure the house that in this view the government has had the wholehearted support of the Canadian university community.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, when the announcement was made some months ago of the proposal to establish this commonwealth scholarship fund, we welcomed it and we welcome the information the minister has just given as to the implementation of this imaginative and constructive commonwealth idea. In working it out from the Canadian point of view as it concerns exchanges on educational matters, no doubt the