

COMMONWEALTH GAMES FEDERATION

BACKGROUND NOTE

In 1930 the first British Empire Games were held in Hamilton, Ontario. The success of this inaugural event led to the decision to continue the celebration of the Games each four years in the mid-year between Olympic Games. To govern the movement, the British Empire Games Federation was formed in 1932. Under a series of names the Federation has guided the Games ever since.

Much of the historic strength of the Commonwealth Games and the Games movement has resulted from the stability of the Commonwealth Games Federation's (CGF) leadership. However, over the past 20 years, the rapid commercialization and politicization of sport at all levels and the accompanying professionalization of sport administration have left the Federation inadequately armed to deal with future challenges. Where once the Games were among the very few international events on the calendar, now they are one of many. The Commonwealth Games must fight for recognition.

Organization of the Commonwealth Games is far more complex today than it was just 20 years ago. The Federation used to be able to exercise control over almost all aspects of the Games, and provide advice and counsel to the Organizing Committee. Now it confronts the complexities of negotiations for television and marketing agreements, the sophistication of sport and scoring equipment and the growing expectation by participants that comfortable amenities must be provided. All these newer factors combine to make the organization of the Games extremely difficult, given that the human resource capacity of the Federation has not changed significantly over the last 20 years.

With sufficient resources, the CGF might establish a communications infrastructure to ensure ongoing linkages among member associations even in the most remote regions, develop a public relations capacity to raise the profile of the Games, the CGF and the Trust, and provide additional support for the strengthening of local Games associations.