

This month, the Commonwealth Medical Conference in Colombo examined the question of health-service delivery in rural areas. Thirty-five specialized conferences and meetings have been held this year permitting detailed, in-depth examination, of specific questions, and exchanges of views and experience by participants based on long and varied experience.

Research papers for use by members have been prepared by the Secretariat. Among these were papers on relations between Commonwealth countries and the enlarged European Economic Community, the problem of equitable and remunerative terms of trade, the economic consequences of the increase of petroleum prices, multinational corporations, and possible Commonwealth action on fertilizer production.

The Secretariat provides support to Commonwealth governments in their negotiations with the European Community through studies on commodity exports, and on Community proposals to stabilize the export earnings of associates and potential associates, as well as those that have not been offered the option of association. The impact of such Secretariat assistance on the countries concerned is immediate and direct; its value and merit require no elaboration.

The Secretariat's Legal Division has arranged exchanges of information on new legislation, the work of law reform commissions, case law and the administration of justice in general. Cabinet secretaries meet to exchange views on forward planning and financial control in government, and to compare procedures and techniques, and to learn from one another in this most critical area of government operations. Following study of the question by an expert group, a report is being prepared on the feasibility of establishing a Commonwealth investment bank, intended to marshal concessionary and commercial resources into financial packages to promote projects in the directly productive sectors of Commonwealth developing countries. Heads of government will consider this report at their meeting in 1975 in Jamaica. Each of these activities has been oriented to the encouragement and intensification of co-operation.

These programs mounted by the Commonwealth enjoy economies not available to multilateral programs elsewhere. Overhead is low; costs of Secretariat programs are less than 15 per cent, liberating the bulk of the funds available for program activity. The return for money invested is good value, and the programs worth while. Response is rapid, and there is precision in meeting needs. In the case of smaller members, whose needs are not met by other