

Question: Why is Canada a member of the Commonwealth?

Answer: Canada is a member because it never joined — that is, it was a founding member. It evolved along with the Commonwealth and acted as a catalyst for the association's growth. With the formation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, the first self-governing state in the British Empire was formed and a basis for the modern Commonwealth was created. Since that date, as more and more British colonies have achieved full nationhood, the great majority of them have chosen to remain linked through the Commonwealth association.

Question: What does Canada do in the Commonwealth, if anything?

Answer: Canada does everything in the Commonwealth. It participates in all aspects of the Commonwealth programs of consultation and functional co-operation, from the lofty Heads of Government Meeting to the more terrestrial concerns of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux.

Question: What does Canada get out of it?

Answer: A lot. Canada benefits from the Commonwealth-fostered exchange of expert opinion on subjects ranging from government administration to plant pathology, and the programs of functional co-operation that the Commonwealth sponsors in these areas. In making a contribution to the improvement of international understanding and the resolution of world problems, Canada recognizes that the Commonwealth is a significant force in the promotion of peace and security among nations and the creation of a stable global environment.

Question: Why didn't I know about all this earlier?

Answer: The Commonwealth association has been a family affair and families do not usually broadcast, with great fanfare, their meetings and activities. In addition, the Common-