

Finance ministers' meeting

The annual meeting of the Commonwealth finance ministers, which took place September 21 and 22 in Barbados, gave ministers an opportunity to exchange views immediately prior to the annual meetings of the World Bank and the IMF. The ministers expressed concern at the generally slow rate of economic recovery, high inflation, unemployment and balance-of-payments problems, and the effects these factors had on developing countries. In their final communique, the ministers indicated the need for economic expansion by industrialized countries with balance-of-payments surpluses as a stimulus to international economic recovery.

The ministers also stressed the need for a positive follow-up to the Conference on International Economic Co-operation, including the transfer of real resources to developing countries. They agreed to continue to use the recommendations of the final report of the Commonwealth Group of Experts, *Towards a New International Economic Order*, as a guide to action in international forums. They also agreed to back an early increase in World Bank capital to permit expansion in its lending programs. And they reviewed recent developments at the IMF and in the field of monetary reform designed to assist developing countries.

The Commonwealth ministers expressed satisfaction with the growth of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation and with its record of "cost effectiveness, speed and responsiveness". They agreed that the report of the Commonwealth Technical Group on the Common Fund be circulated to the international community as an important technical document. They also emphasized that the Fund must keep pace with expanding requirements of member governments, and expressed pleasure at the increase in the size of the pledges received from some developing as well as developed countries.

Law

The year was one of special activity in Commonwealth consultation in the field of law. In July, Canadian delegates attended a meeting of the Commonwealth Law Conference in Edinburgh, and in August the first meeting of Commonwealth Law Reform Agencies in London. Also, Canada was host to the biennial meeting of Commonwealth law ministers and attorneys-general in August, held in Winnipeg. The Minister of Justice, Ron Basford, was chairman of the conference; the inaugural address was given by Chief Justice Bora Laskin. The law ministers considered reports prepared by the Secretariat on such topics as reciprocal recognition and the enforcement of judgments and court orders, the role of the modern attorney-general, delays in the administration of justice, and training in the legal profession.

Commonwealth education ministers

Ministers of education met in Accra in March to discuss measures to help solve some of the educational problems facing the Commonwealth. They agreed to strengthen functional co-operation in education in a number of ways. A 13-member Canadian delegation was led by the Honourable Ben Hanuschak, Chairman of the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education and Minister of Continuing Education and Manpower for Manitoba.

Commonwealth health ministers

The fifth Commonwealth medical conference, attended by health ministers, was held in Wellington in November. The Canadian delegation was led by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Ken Robinson, and included representation from the provinces. The conference considered ways of enabling the community at large to play a more positive part in health-improvement, and examined the need for a closer relation between training institutions and health ministries, the selection and training of health personnel and the development of health-care delivery systems. They agreed on recommendations for practical action by national governments, regional groupings and the Commonwealth Secretariat.