

Conference. The eleventh General Conference of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association was held from September 27 to October 7 in Singapore. There was a regional seminar on Commonwealth education in Hong Kong from September 28 to October 8, and from October 4 to 9 the seventeenth Canadian regional conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was held in Charlottetown. From October 4 to 13, the third conference of Commonwealth postal administrators was held in Sri Lanka, which was also host to the ninth biennial meeting of the Commonwealth Science Council from November 29 to December 3. From December 13 to 18, the fourth Commonwealth Conference on Development and Human Ecology was held in Dacca.

### **The grass-roots Commonwealth**

A notable development in Commonwealth affairs in 1976 was the growth in the role of non-governmental organizations, the "unofficial Commonwealth". In tune with this increasing activity, Dalhousie University in Halifax played host to a conference on the Commonwealth and non-governmental organizations in October (Commonwealth NGOs number well over 200). The conference underlined the need for increasing contacts between the official and unofficial Commonwealth.

Among the Commonwealth NGO meetings that took place in 1976 were the second conference of the Commonwealth Association of Planners in Auckland in February and a seminar convened by the Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy in Zambia from April 6 to 9. The fourth Commonwealth conference of the Royal Life-saving Society was held in May in London. In July, Georgetown entertained the twelfth Caribbean Regional Conference of Parliamentary Associations and a Commonwealth seminar on international educational placements was held in Regina. The fourteenth Commonwealth Book Fair was opened in Britain in August and in September the triennial Conference of the Commonwealth Association of Architects was held in York.

Across Canada, the Royal Commonwealth Society maintained its traditional lively interest in Commonwealth affairs and co-sponsored with the Department of External Affairs the fourth Student Commonwealth Conference in Ottawa in April. One hundred high-school students from Ontario and Quebec participated in this three-day conference, which culminated in a model heads-of-government meeting.

### **Visit of the Secretary-General**

Canada welcomed Secretary-General Ramphal on an official visit from October 27 to November 7. He came to Canada to participate in the Dalhousie Conference, to attend a meeting in Ottawa of the national council of the Royal Commonwealth Society and to speak in Toronto and London. He met Canadian officials on November 4 and the Prime Minister the following day. Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Ramphal discussed a wide range of issues, including Southern Africa, the Commonwealth Games, and the 1977 heads-of-government meeting.

### **Membership**

On June 28, 1976, the Commonwealth welcomed a new member, the Seychelles, which, like Canada and Mauritius, is a bilingual country and a full-fledged member of both the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. The Commonwealth has also fostered the growth of new and interesting contacts between the Secretariat and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation.

Secretary-General Ramphal recently declared: "The Commonwealth has one-quarter of the world's people, but it has nearly one-half of the world's poor. And of those who are classified as the 'absolute poor', the poorest of the poor . . . nearly three out of every four live within the Commonwealth." This stresses the immensity of the task facing the Commonwealth, and suggests that Canadians should continue to give it their full support.