

the present level of economic assistance provided by Commonwealth countries to Africa. Hon. Members will appreciate that, since consideration of the proposal made by our own Prime Minister in London has not yet been completed, it would not be appropriate for me to give any detailed account at the present time.

I can say, however, that this Government has been concerned for some time about the desirability of the Commonwealth countries providing the new and emerging nations of Africa with additional economic assistance. What is contemplated is economic aid over and above what Commonwealth countries now contribute to Africa. As we all know, Canada at the present has a programme of technical assistance to Commonwealth countries in Africa amounting to about \$500,000 each year. In addition, of course, the African members of the Commonwealth share in the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan whereby young people from the various African universities come to universities in Canada and the other nations of the Commonwealth, and possibly Canadian students go to some of the universities in these African countries.

We believe that the initiative in taking further steps to help the nations of the African continent is a very important one, particularly because of the economic and political future of that continent. At the present time I think Africa is the most important continent in the world from the point of view of potential development and potential changes, and with the new nations emerging from time to time it is vitally important so far as the Commonwealth is concerned. Nigeria, for example, will become independent on October 1, and I believe that the Prime Ministers' Conference now meeting in London has agreed that Nigeria will be accepted as a full member of the Commonwealth. This is certainly a continent to watch and a continent to which all possible assistance should be given.