

III. THE TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN.

5. A survey of the particular problems requiring investigation in the field of defence science reveals a number of major items on which co-operation throughout the British Commonwealth is essential if satisfactory solutions are to be achieved. Examples of these problems have been enumerated in Items 4 and 5 of the Agenda for the Informal Commonwealth Conference on Defence Science. They range from investigations requiring extensive tracts of virtually uninhabited land to investigations involving world wide surveys and studies. On the one hand, for example, mention might be made of the areas needed for testing guided missiles and supersonic pilotless aircraft (Items 4(a) and (b) of Agenda) and of the less extensive, though still comparatively large, areas needed for testing the resistance of concrete structures to bombing and shelling (Item 4(g) of Agenda) and for full scale testing of chemical and biological warfare agents (Item 4(h) of Agenda). On the other hand, the study and mapping of coastal hydrology and beach intelligence (Item 4(j) of Agenda) and the sponsoring and co-ordination of operational research (Item 5 of Agenda) form typical examples of problems in which co-ordination of effort is called for. A third group demand climatic conditions typical of areas of the world in which the fighting forces might have to operate. These inevitably overlap with the investigations mentioned above. Climatic conditions of various types can be simulated artificially but the complete equipments can only be fully and satisfactorily tested in the natural conditions of climate and terrain in which they will be used. Hence, the Agenda for the Informal Commonwealth Conference includes a group of problems involving the provision of facilities for testing weapons, equipment, aircraft, etc. under a variety of climatic conditions (Items 4(c), (d) and (f) of Agenda).

6. The United Kingdom delegation feels that these tasks may be regarded as typical examples of the problems likely to arise as research on defence science progresses and it is hoped that discussions at the Informal Commonwealth Conference on Defence Science will indicate how far the various members of the Commonwealth will be able to assist with the investigations and whether, in certain cases, it would be desirable to centre prime responsibility for a particular problem outside the United Kingdom.

7. It may prove necessary that following the general discussions at the Informal Commonwealth Conference on Defence Science more detailed discussions between the experts will have to be arranged on such questions as staffing, financial arrangements, and so on. The main object in raising these examples for discussion at the forthcoming Conference is to bring to the fore those problems on which co-operative effort already seems indicated and to avoid any unnecessary overlapping of the facilities.

IV. THE MEANS WHEREBY PROGRAMMES MIGHT BE CO-ORDINATED AND PERIODICALLY REVIEWED

8. It will be clear that any measure of decentralisation of work on particular problems in the field of defence science will involve arrangements for co-ordinating the results achieved; for reviewing progress; and for discussing the programmes of further work. At least four possible alternatives seem to present themselves; each of these is considered in turn below.

Method 1 - Present arrangements.

9. During the war, collaboration with the Dominions and India (apart from the exchange of technical information and reports) has operated on what has been virtually a bilateral basis. The results of work from such arrangements have, however, been placed freely at the disposal of all members of the Commonwealth.