

D. Canada and the Unofficial Commonwealth:

Extensive governmental and official relations are supplemented by the wide variety and number of Commonwealth contacts at the unofficial level. Well over 200 non-governmental bodies form the human element of the association and contribute much to the strengthening of Commonwealth ties. Of the many Commonwealth conferences, events and meetings in any given year, approximately 50 percent usually are sponsored by non-governmental organizations. Some of these are financed or partially funded by the Commonwealth Foundation.

To encourage the voluntary sector within the Commonwealth, a Heads of Government meeting created the Commonwealth Foundation in 1965. Its purpose is to promote interchanges between organizations in professional fields and to assist, when required, in the establishment of non-governmental institutions or associations where these have not previously existed. At the 1979 Lusaka meeting, Heads of

Government decided that, subject to a review, the Foundation's mandate might expand to include culture, information, social welfare and rural development while maintaining its interest in the professional organizations.

All members of the Commonwealth contribute to the Foundation's budget. Like those of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, the Foundation's operations are for the direct benefit of all member countries. Canada views the Foundation as filling an important need other institutions and programs do not cover. The Foundation has helped establish and often provides continuing support for numerous Commonwealth professional associations. These organizations represent architects, librarians, nurses, veterinarians, land surveyors and museum curators to name but a few. In fact, they cover the spectrum of human endeavour, from the promotion of press freedom to the study of Commonwealth literature.

One of the most active associations is that of Commonwealth parliamentarians.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association brings together members of national and provincial or state legislatures from all parts of the Commonwealth for seminars and the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

Another voluntary organization is the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS). The Society is active in many countries of the Commonwealth. In Canada, the National Council and the nine branches of the RCS arrange conferences and discussions on Commonwealth matters and bring an awareness of the Commonwealth to schools through projects such as an annual essay competition. A major school-related project sponsored by the Society and organized by the Ottawa branch is the annual Student Commonwealth Conference. It takes place in the national capital each year in the spring, and brings together Canadian high