

four by senior ministers. (3) The London meeting was one of the biggest consultative gatherings of heads of government from all parts of the world since the United Nations Charter was signed in 1945.

In reporting to the House of Commons on his return from the London meeting, the Canadian Prime Minister said:

"This is perhaps the greatest strength of the Commonwealth, this opportunity ... for men of goodwill to discuss one with another the problems which affect them and the 850 million people whom they represent. All the other advantages of the Commonwealth relationship -- the exchanges of people, the trading patterns, the economic assistance and co-operation schemes, the informality of diplomatic representation -- assume their tone from the free and frank dialogue which takes place at the prime ministerial meetings". (4)

Although the prime ministers' meeting was the most important event of the year, the Commonwealth functioned in other forums. The finance ministers held their annual meeting in September, this time in Barbados. Prior to the conference of the World Health Organization in Boston, Commonwealth representatives met to discuss plans for the next Commonwealth medical conference. The fourth meeting of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Council was held in London in April, and there were a number of special or regional meetings, including the African Regional Seminar on Youth organized by the Commonwealth Secretariat in Nairobi in November. Throughout the year, the working party of the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee continued to work with the Secretariat in preparation for the Fifth Commonwealth Education Conference, which is to take place in Canberra early in 1971.

Commonwealth countries continued to receive a large share of Canada's development assistance through the Colombo Plan, the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan (SCAAP) and the Canadian program for Commonwealth Caribbean assistance. Canada's total contribution under the Colombo Plan since its inception 20 years ago exceeds \$1 billion. Canadian allocations

(3) Member countries are Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria, Cyprus, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Malta, Zambia, the Gambia, Singapore, Guyana, Botswana, Lesotho, Barbados, Mauritius and Swaziland. The Commonwealth also provides appropriate forms of membership for the "mini-states" of Nauru, which is fully independent, and the West Indies Associated States. These special members enjoy, in general, all the advantages of Commonwealth membership other than attendance at prime ministers' meetings.

(4) Hansard, January 20, 1969, P. 4459.