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INFORMAL COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE ON DEFENCE SCIENCE
CO-OPERATION ON DEFENCE RESEARCH WITHIN THE BRITISH
COMMONWEALTH.

Note by the United Kingdom Delegation

I. THE PROBLEMS

1. The first two Items on the Agenda for the Informal Commonwealth Conference on Defence Science are:-

Item 1. To consider the tasks which might be undertaken in defence research by British Commonwealth Governments in such a way as to make the best possible use of available and potential facilities and staff in each country.

Item 2. To consider the means whereby the programmes of defence research undertaken by British Commonwealth Governments might best be co-ordinated and periodically reviewed.

II. THE NEED FOR CO-OPERATION WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH.

2. The present trend of defence science shows clearly that, in order properly to equip the fighting forces of the British Commonwealth against future contingencies, there is an immense amount of research and development to be undertaken. Such research and development must be undertaken in peace-time. There will be no time if war breaks out again to make up for lost time in the development of weapons of the extreme complexity now required for defence. The resources of any one member of the Commonwealth alone will be insufficient to cope with the whole programme and if the various problems are to be attacked with a vigour commensurate with their importance and magnitude there can be no doubt that the full co-operation of all the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations will be essential. There is the further aspect than any future war may be world wide and it is not possible to say where the first weight of attack will fall. It seems clear, therefore, that adequate reserves of scientific defence potential should be created in each country of the Commonwealth to meet such threats.

3. In the case of the United Kingdom there is the further fact that the country is not suited geographically or climatically for the proper investigation of many of the weapons of war likely to be needed in the future or for the development of the best means of defence against them. Much of the work will have to be carried out in those parts of the world which are better suited for the purpose. Dispersal of effect also seems desirable on strategic grounds in view of the long ranges which may be attained by weapons of the future.

4. For these reasons, therefore, the first two items of the Agenda for the Informal Commonwealth Conference on Defence Science are regarded by the United Kingdom Delegation as of major importance. The orientation and success of the future programme of work on the many outstanding problems in defence science will depend largely on these discussions.