that we should be involved in all of these areas: it is a matter of judgment when the butter gets spread too thin to taste! But Ministers have decided collectively that we should be so involved, and it has been exciting to try to prove them right.

It quickly became apparent that Commonwealth Governments, with the best will in the world, were not always able or prepared to give the Secretariat the means needed to achieve the ends they willed. The total budget of the Secretariat (today some £37m) is considerably less than would normally be administered by a single relatively junior official in Britain's Department for International Development. When the £24m of the Commonwealth's technical assistance arm, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), so ably administered by my Canadian colleague, Mr Nick Hare, is subtracted, and our fixed costs of salaries and administration are similarly removed, the sum remaining for the direct costs of our programmes is by international standards ridiculously small (£3.8m).

The trend, too, is disheartening. Since 1991, the year of the Harare Declaration's new programme, resources have fallen by 25-30% in real terms. Worse still, four new members have joined or re-joined our association. I therefore have to spend a good deal of time explaining to our funding governments how we manage small pockets of money to ensure that each flows into an area of comparative advantage, where the Commonwealth can make a distinctive contribution. The effort of exposition often seems disproportionate to the sums in question. Successive reviews of our programmes have suggested that the money is well spent. And when we were asked last year to say whether we could spend a budget of £50m instead of £37m, and to identify projects to that end, we had no difficulty whatever in doing so: and late proposals had to be turned away.

In brief, we are well aware of public expenditure constraints on our funding governments. But we would hope that when our Heads of Governments' committed themselves at Edinburgh to reverse the fall in ODA, they meant it. If so, this would enable

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