

A STATEMENT BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, MR. FERNAND LEBLANC MP, TO THE DALHOUSIE CONFERENCE: THE COMMONWEALTH AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, OCTOBER 1976.

I am particularly happy that this Commonwealth occasion should be one of my first major engagements since being named Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Jamieson.

In a world where governments tend to encroach more and more upon the everyday lives of individuals, the resilience and relevance of the Commonwealth's non-governmental organizations has never been more important. We would be unwise to think that the problems of the world could be solved by governments alone and that the spirit of self-help should not be tapped to tackle our problems. What I am saying is that non-governmental institutions can and must play a more active role. I know that within the many unofficial voluntary organizations which are concerned with Commonwealth objectives there exists an enormous reservoir of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm. Obviously these organizations differ in strength and character but they do have one feature in common and that is that people belong and subscribe to them because they want to be involved and because they believe in the Commonwealth. Although until recently there has been little official recognition of the value of the NCOs within the Commonwealth, they have long been a mainstay of the Commonwealth. The strength of the association's non-governmental bodies lies in their capacity to strengthen public awareness