

# ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN

A total of 1,032 Scholars were holding awards under the Plan in the first term of the academic year in 14 awarding countries. Thus for the second year running the Plan has now been operating on the scale originally envisaged at its inception at the First Commonwealth Education Conference. For a true picture, however, of the scale on which the Plan now operates, the numbers holding Fellowships and other senior awards should be included. Five awarding countries - Australia, Britain, Canada, India and New Zealand - now make awards available at the higher level, and a total of 20 such awards were taken up during the reporting period. In addition, Britain having instituted Senior Medical Fellowships and Medical Fellowships at an intermediate level between Commonwealth Scholarships and Visiting Professorships, a total of 13 Senior Medical Fellows and 59 Medical Fellows took up awards during the period under report.

The Fourth Commonwealth Education Conference, which met in Lagos in February/March 1968 provided an opportunity for mutual discussion by Commonwealth countries of this achievement and an appraisal of the Plan's contribution to Commonwealth Co-operation in Education.

Committee A set up by the Conference to consider questions in the field of Higher Education devoted much of its attention to taking stock of the operation of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan in the various countries, the general feeling being that the scheme had now consolidated itself along the lines laid down by its founders and that, the general objectives envisaged at the First Commonwealth Education Conference in 1959 having been attained, the time was ripe for its further development in fresh directions. Such growth however depends very much on the initiatives that can be proposed by countries which have the necessary additional funds available, and the Conference was gratified to learn of a proposal by Canada to increase by approximately 20 per cent the number of its awards under the Plan and of a new British project (additional to the new scheme for medical awards mentioned above) to establish special work-related awards to enable academic teachers, principally from developing countries, to receive suitable ad hoc training and experience in Britain so as to increase their usefulness as members of teaching departments in their own universities. The Committee also appointed, and adopted the recommendations of, a Working Party of experts on the detailed working of the Plan which also prepared at the request of the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee an Administrative Handbook recapitulating, for the guidance of officials administering Commonwealth Scholarships in each country, the rulings that have been given at this and previous Conferences on points that arise under the complicated mechanism of a common Plan operating by a large number of bilateral arrangements between individual countries. The Conference also gave its approval to the introduction of a mild measure of flexibility in the method (laid down at the First Education Conference) of selecting award holders, if desired by an awarding country.

Apart from the more senior awards such as Visiting Fellowships or Professorships, the majority of Commonwealth Scholarships are awarded to students wishing to study for higher degrees (mainly doctorates). In the ensuing pages, however, a number of countries

emphasise their interest in receiving awards at undergraduate level. It has now, in fact, become an established principle of the Plan that awarding countries will consider nominations of candidates for first degree courses from countries which at present have no tertiary education facilities in the academic field concerned. Table 7 of Appendix V (page 75) shows that during the reporting period 119 Scholars (11.5 per cent of the total of Commonwealth Scholars) held awards for study leading to a first degree or diploma, while 734 (71.1 per cent) held awards for study leading to a higher degree, the remainder being those Scholars who were reading for a second first degree or for a post-graduate diploma, pursuing other university or non-university courses, or carrying out research.

From the figures given in the Appendices, little change is noted in the pattern of distribution of Scholars by age, sex and subject which has emerged during recent years. The number of Scholars reading medicine has, however, risen by 41, an increase of 60.3 per cent on the corresponding figures for the period covered by the Seventh Annual Report. It is also interesting to note that women constituted 10.2 per cent of Scholars holding awards in the various countries, and that during the period under report 10.4 per cent of the applications received for awards under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan were made by women. Women however constituted 11.6 per cent of the total number of candidates nominated for awards under the Plan and 15.1 per cent of the total number of Scholars taking up awards during this reporting period. This appears to indicate that women in most countries are participating successfully in the competitions for the awards offered under the Plan and it is hoped that this trend will continue as was expressed at the Fourth Commonwealth Education Conference.