

Introductory Note

Commonwealth Trade Ministers, at their meeting in London in June, 1966, underlined the importance of tourism as a foreign exchange earner for most Commonwealth countries (without the handicap of quotas or tariff barriers) and felt that the advantage of a common language and familiarity with each other's history might be utilised for promoting intra-Commonwealth travel. The meeting recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat organise a meeting of experts on tourism to study the question of developing tourism to Commonwealth countries and to explore areas for increased Commonwealth co-operation in promoting the tourist industry of these countries.

Subsequently, a small working party of Commonwealth officials and members of the Secretariat was set up in November, 1966, to prepare background papers for the meeting.

The working party met in the first half of 1967. They agreed that a factual statement setting out the present organisation of the tourist industry in each of the Commonwealth countries would be useful for a constructive discussion of the scope for increasing Commonwealth co-operation in the development of tourism. The working party further agreed on a format for the supply of information, so that there would be uniformity of presentation of factual material supplied by Commonwealth Governments.

A paper prepared by the working party on the "Present Organisation of the Tourist Industry in Each of the Commonwealth Countries" was accordingly placed before the Meeting of Experts.

The Meeting of Experts on Commonwealth Co-operation in the Development of Tourism was held in Valletta, Malta, from 30th October to 2nd November, 1967. They welcomed the action taken by the working party in submitting this background paper on the "Present Organisation of the Tourist Industry in Each of the Commonwealth Countries". They found the document to be the first of its kind prepared on this subject and expressed the view that it gave a very useful and comprehensive picture of the organisation of the tourist industry of Commonwealth countries. The meeting, therefore, recommended that this document should be produced on a regular annual basis. It was also felt that it should be expanded to include information on the Associated West Indian States and British Dependent Territories.

The present publication on the "Organisation of the Tourist Industry in Commonwealth Countries" is the third issue of its kind and is based on information supplied by Commonwealth Governments to the end of December, 1969.

The Experts also submitted several other recommendations to Commonwealth Governments which were generally accepted by them. These recommendations included proposals that tourism should be allowed to qualify as a development industry for both multilateral and bilateral financial assistance; that the Commonwealth Technical Assistance Scheme be extended to include requests for technical assistance for the tourist industries of developing Commonwealth countries; it was proposed that a small working party be set up to study the desirability and feasibility of introducing special Commonwealth preferential fares; and while it was agreed there

was some scope for Commonwealth co-operation in the field of tourism on a Commonwealth-wide basis, the Experts suggested there were more immediate prospects of practical results through regional co-operation and specific proposals were put forward for increased co-operation in tourist promotion and publicity.

Since the Malta Meeting, a group of Commonwealth Airfares Experts met with the Secretariat in London during August, 1968 to examine the question of reducing promotional fares between Commonwealth points. The Working Party put forward five recommendations to Commonwealth Governments for their consideration. However, due to the protracted deliberations by members of IATA in determining fares for the 1969-71 period, the work of this Group was not finalised. The Group is to meet again in May, 1970 in order to finalise this work. With regard to the provision of technical assistance for developing tourism within the Commonwealth, an expert from the Commonwealth Technical Assistance headquarters group was sent to Botswana and Swaziland during 1969 to advise on future developments.

It may be of interest to note the present position with regard to the extent of co-operation already existing in the Commonwealth. Large amounts of assistance have been provided through financial aid and technical assistance for budget support or general development projects, providing facilities and services such as railways, roads, ports, airports, electricity and water supplies. While these facilities are necessary for developing basic industries, they also provide some of the infra-structure essential for tourism development.

The United Kingdom has made a number of grants and loans to its dependent territories under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act for projects related to tourist development. Assistance to independent Commonwealth countries has been made largely through the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) whose capital has been supplied almost entirely by the United Kingdom exchequer. The CDC has hotel interests in the Caribbean, East Africa and West Africa. The supply of technical assistance in the form of advisers and operational experts and the provision of training has been made available largely through the United Kingdom Ministry of Overseas Development. Experts and consultants have been sent to the British Virgin Islands, Kenya, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Malta and Gibraltar. The tourist industries of Malta and Cyprus have also been assisted through studies of their industries undertaken by British experts.

In Canada, the External Aid Office, a part of the Department of External Affairs, has assisted financially, throughout the Commonwealth, in developing various basic facilities necessary for tourist development, and training programmes are conducted for Commonwealth visitors to study tourism in Canada. Assistance to tourist development has been extended to Kenya and Nigeria, and experts in the field of hotel management have been sent to Barbados and Ceylon. In the capital investment field, Canada has supplied trucks for road improvement in national parks in East Africa and airport facilities in the Eastern Caribbean. A grant was also provided to Ceylon to develop its main airport at Katunayake, and a Canadian adviser was sent to serve as Manager.

Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga have for some time jointly promoted tourism from the North American continent. Australia gives

annual grants to its dependent territories such as Papua-New Guinea. There is provision for training in tourism, in Australia, under the Colombo Plan and SCAAP.

In the past, India's Tourist Department has also provided some training of tourist industry personnel from countries in the ECAFE Region.