

# Commonwealth Today



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Presenting the Commonwealth to the Commonwealth

## The Commonwealth: instrument for world cooperation

From a speech by Mr. Arnold Smith, Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat, to the Royal Commonwealth Society

The brotherhood of man is a tenuous concept but we have to achieve it, and I think the Commonwealth can help. The Commonwealth has been having its problems, and it will have more. Now that need not discourage us. Problems to people in my profession and to political institutions such as the Commonwealth are as ill-health and disease to doctors. I do not think we should apologise for these problems. We should see to what extent the Commonwealth can help to resolve them.

It is as easy to be cynical about the Commonwealth as it is to be cynical about humanity, but it is neither very rational nor very constructive. We cannot afford to be defeatist about the prospects of humanity. We have to nudge humanity forward fairly rapidly in our generation and the next, towards more understanding and tolerance, and towards effective cooperation and institutions of communities among the races and continents of mankind. We have to develop quickly the habits and insight and institutions of cooperation on a global basis—nothing less.

The great significance of the Commonwealth is that it gives us one of the promising and valuable instruments that we need to make possible the accomplishment of this global purpose.

The most difficult, most important, and most potentially dangerous problems in the next 20 or 30 years or more are going to be those between the different races of mankind—between people of different continents and different civilisations, between the affluent industrial societies and the poorer countries that are in earlier stages of economic development. It is precisely this which is going to be—indeed already is—the key area of world politics, and it is here where the

modern Commonwealth has a most significant and rather a unique role.

The Commonwealth is made up of important representatives of virtually all of the races and continents, of the rich, the poor, the very big and the very small. It operates on a scale larger than the pilot plant scale, but nevertheless rather smaller than a global scale, but small enough to make a solution of some of these problems somewhat easier to work out;



























































