

THE BRITISH COUNCIL

THE annual report of the British Council for 1958-59 includes a brief tribute to the late chairman, Sir David Kelly, the customary appendixes, particulars of university interchanges, courses and study tours, etc., arranged by the Council in the United Kingdom or overseas, exhibitions and publications, analysis of estimates and accounts, and an assessment by the director-general, Sir Paul Sinker, of the main tasks confronting the Council (The British Council. Annual Report 1958-59. Pp. vi + 114 + 9 plates. London: British Council, 1959). Over the past five years, the Council's gross income, derived mainly from public funds, has almost exactly doubled, from £3 million to £6 million. Its work is carried out in about seventy countries, now some four-fifths in the developing areas of the world, especially in the Near and Middle East, South and South-East Asia and Africa, rather more than half of this being devoted to the recently independent countries of the Commonwealth and to Colonial territories, and the fifth, devoted to Europe, includes an important extension to the German Federal Republic.

Sir Paul Sinker emphasizes three tasks as of pre-eminent importance: educational work, especially but not exclusively in the teaching of English; the fostering of personal contacts between British and overseas people, especially between opposite numbers in the educational, scientific, professional and cultural fields; and helping to ensure that English reading matter is as widely available as possible in the countries with which the Council is concerned. In educational work he comments that the recruitment of British teachers for overseas posts has been a main point of growth during the past two years, and the Council has been concerned to ensure good salaries and living conditions, reasonable security and opportunity for obtaining a suitable job on return. All this has meant additional work for the Council's representatives overseas, and since 1957 these posts have been increased by twenty-five of an educational character. The filling of university posts has presented special difficulty. As regards personal contacts, besides some 40,000 overseas students in Britain, the Council looks after, every year, some 5,000 senior visitors, and Sir Paul directs attention to the proportionate increase in the number of visitors for scientific and technical purposes and to the very considerable increase in the Council's responsibilities for administration of the United Kingdom fellowships and similar schemes on behalf of the Government and other authorities. More than 2,000 Fellows and Scholars a year are cared for under various schemes, and the Council is also responsible for organizing a smaller but important outward flow of specialist tours from the United Kingdom. On the printed word, Sir Paul Sinker stresses the key importance of the library in a British Council centre and the advances on a wide front which have been made possible by the Government announcement on June 22, 1959, regarding the export of British books, etc. Finally, he refers briefly to the opportunities which arise as Colonial territories attain independence and also to those offered by educational television.

The general survey of the year notes that the Council's responsibilities are likely to be increased as

a result of the Commonwealth Educational Conference in July 1959, as it is probable that the Council will be asked to assist in implementing the main recommendations of the Conference. About half the £1.5 million by which the Council's grants have been increased since 1957 has been used to implement the decisions announced in the first White Paper regarding the teaching of English overseas. Eighty teachers have been recruited for specific posts, mainly in India, Pakistan, South East Asia, the Middle East and Africa, and almost double this number should be recruited in 1959-60 and a further seventy teachers supplied by the provision of financial assistance to schools. Besides 100 scholarships awarded to bring overseas teachers to the United Kingdom for training, a further 68 are being awarded in 1959-60, and the Council has been encouraged by the growing interest of British universities in these problems. Qualified lecturers and tutors are needed, however, at summer schools for teachers of English both at home and abroad, and a further problem is the provision of material for English language teaching.

Agreement was reached with the government authorities of several countries, notably Pakistan, to extend full Council services to their students in Britain, and during the year 7,500 overseas students were met on first arrival. Some 101 specialist tours, advisory visits and delegations, included one to Poland by Prof. J. N. Davidson, the first of several visits of biochemists arranged at the invitation of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and another to India by Sir Harry Platt. Prof. R. M. Kenedi, of the Royal College of Science and Technology, Glasgow, was invited to visit Lima Engineering University to lecture, assist in organizing programmes of studies and advise on purchase of equipment, and a British engineering library has been opened in the Institute of Higher Studies, Buenos Aires. Under the Commonwealth Scheme of university interchange, awards were made to permit ten short visits for consultation and lectures and 47 travel grants were made to university teachers and postgraduate research workers: under the foreign scheme 121 short visits and three longer visits were arranged, besides 57 visits under the younger research workers interchange scheme. Of 5,153 overseas visitors in the United Kingdom under the auspices of the British Council, 996 were in science and technology, 1,255 in education, 1,152 in social science, and 974 in medicine, 739 coming from the Middle East, 562 from South-East Asia and the Far East, 347 from Latin America, 1,232 from Central and East Europe, and 953 from West Europe. Of the 7,487 students met on arrival, 459 were found permanent accommodation in Council residences, 310 in university halls of residence and hostels, and 3,215 in lodgings. Transit accommodation on first arrival was arranged for 1,877 in Council residences and in lodgings for 1,178, while temporary accommodation was arranged for another 1,354 in Council residences and 4,686 in lodgings, and 9,749 students enrolled at Council centres, 2,353 attending vacation courses of 7-15 days, 1,340 week-end courses, and 8,778 study visits to factories, museums, etc.