

## COMEX 111 - The Third Commonwealth Expedition.

- Under the Patronage of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.
- Organised by Lt. Col. Lionel Gregory,  
110 Old Brompton Road,  
London S.W.7.

Background. In 1964 Mr. Nehru proposed that there should be a festival to bring about a new consciousness in Commonwealth countries through bringing young people together. The Indian Cabinet voted £100,000 for this. Whitehall took cautious soundings and the Government finally allocated £1,000. The Indian Government subsequently became lukewarm but a success for Comex 111 would probably mean the Indian Government restoring the initiative for a Commonwealth centre in India.

In 1965, the pilot expedition, Comex 1, of 210 members travelling in five 42-seater coaches, crossed the frontier from Pakistan to India to find the two countries at war. They completed the pre-planned itinerary of visits to 18 universities and to Simla, but then found that bridges had been blown behind Comex 1 and the overland route back to Europe closed. The coaches were sold to the Indian Government and the expedition flew back to England.

In 1967, Comex 11, of 320 members, travelling in eleven 30-seater coaches and representing 18 countries, repeated the programme. After 14,000 miles and within three days of home, the Durham contingent lost 14 of its members in Yugoslavia. Eight months later, after much anxiety and high drama, brought President Tito's Abolitasia, a prerogative exercised only once before in the history of Yugoslavia,, abolishing the case against the driver of the coach.

Positive Success. There is much that can be said vis a vis the last expedition. The first major cultural success was in Tehran where Comex performed in the University, in the Hilton Hotel and before the Ambassadors. Students from Tehran University organised a reception and their own performance; the occasion was an enjoyable and stimulating experience for both sides. The British Ambassador, Sir Dennis Wright, has repeatedly spoken highly of the effect of Comex in Persia and this has been substantiated by journalists who happened to be there at the same time as one or other Comex. Full performances in several theatres in Delhi lasted one week and made a big impact on the news and art pages of Indian newspapers. The success in Tehran was repeated in the University of Chandigargh and as a result all members of Comex were cared for very warmly and hospitably by the Indian students there - as in Delhi too. Outside the academic world Glasgow's coach proved to be the best example of welcome to be found. They were invited to a small village, Sangrur, welcomed outside its walls by the entire population and given the chance to have meals and audiences with all sectors of the community, rich and poor, administrative such as prisons, health and religious. Other coaches found similar interest.

Comex-in-India. There is now a high powered Comex-in-India Committee composed of Politicians, Vice-Chancellors and businessmen. They are preparing a full programme and co-ordinating the meeting and movement of the separate groups in India. A plot of land has definitely been set aside in Delhi for Comex to make of it what it will. This has obviously much potential, though the money needed to build imaginatively will again only be forthcoming if the expedition this summer is successful. Randolph's Library services in London are working now on recommendations which could form one aspect of this centre. The old Governors Residence in

Simla is also probably available for Comex initiated activities and there are various suggestions as to where such a thing could lead.

Structure and Plan of Comex III. In 1969, Comex III, of 500 members, travelling in twenty 26-seater coaches will leave Dover on the Enterprise IV on July 15th. Comex in Britain is to be centred on the following regions:- Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Keele, Kent, Lancaster, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford and Yorkshire. Comex in Britain is to co-ordinate with expeditions from other countries. Pakistan might mount an expedition which would meet the British Comex in Tehran and accompany it to Lahore. India is to form groups around places such as Madras and Bombay, which will go by road and rail to meet the British in Delhi. Singapore and Ceylon are considering the organisation of contingents and some Canadians and Americans are to join the British coaches.

#### Programme in India.

Reception at the Red Fort or Town Hall by the Mayor and Corporation of Delhi.

A pre-planned ceremonial drive through Delhi and the laying of wreaths at Raj Ghat, Shantivana and Vijaya Ghat.

Visits to forty Indian Universities, Each British contingent will visit two Universities. During this period, Colonel Gregory and three members from each contingent will visit Simla by train.

A Commonwealth Cultural Festival in Delhi over six days including:-

A panorama of Shakespeare at Talkatora Gardens.

A variety entertainment at Tagore Theatre or Vijayan Shavan.

A display of national and cottage industries in the area of Connaught Circus.

A display of the Comex III camp and equipment in camp formation.

An open air symposium on the Commonwealth and the meaning and purpose of the Comex House in Delhi and the permanent centre in Simla.

Radio and Television broadcasts.

Prime Minister's Reception.