



The Vancouver Island Student Commonwealth Conference gathered for its annual meeting this past November, providing a fantastic opportunity for local youth to engage in meaningful and enriching debate about the effects of climate change. Particularly how the Commonwealth can protect against drought, and water overuse, and how low lying Nations in the Commonwealth would be affected as a result of climate change. Students took on the roles of heads of government of various Commonwealth Nations, and spent the day working to reach consensus, on resolutions that would aid low lying countries, and possible environmental refugees that could emerge, as a result of continued climate change.

Many students participating had been previously involved with Model United Nations the switch to simulating a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting posed its challenges; primarily, the introduction of consensus seeking culture. This provided a great opportunity for the youth involved to grow their abilities to communicate, work with others, and to take into account the needs of all parties involved, when working towards a common resolution. The skills the delegates learned and developed were easily visible, and to see them grow throughout the conference was very rewarding for all organizers.

The event was held at St. Michaels University School in Victoria, British Columbia, organized by St. Michaels University School teachers Tony Goodman, and David Lynch. I myself had the privilege of serving as Secretary General, and moderated debate, using many lessons I had learned at the National Student Commonwealth Forum in Ottawa [hosted by the Royal Commonwealth Society, Ottawa Branch] the previous year. Two delegates from the Conference, Katie Oestreicher, and Amelia Hadfield, were commended by a panel of judges for their ability to spark meaningful debate, and accurately represent their chosen Nations, and they will have the opportunity now to attend the National Student Commonwealth Forum this spring. The Conference was a fabulous opportunity for youth to become more engaged with issues facing the Commonwealth, and to learn more about the Commonwealth itself, and I very much forward to the next conference, and being able to connect with more local youth.

-Koby Grewal

Royal Commonwealth Society of Canada Vancouver Island Branch Youth Representative