

Economic Development of Under-Developed Countries

The material poverty of millions of people throughout Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East constitutes, from the economic, social, and political points of view, one of the most challenging problems of the modern world. It has been increasingly recognized that the standard of living in the economically less advanced countries must somehow be raised if lasting conditions of peace and stability are to be achieved, and under the Charter of the United Nations, member governments have undertaken to co-operate for the promotion of conditions of economic and social progress for all peoples. The United Nations provides a forum in which the needs of the under-developed countries have been stated, and the possibilities and means of affording them assistance may be explored. While the aid so far provided has been small in relation to the stated requirements, an encouraging start has been made in the process of helping the economically less advanced countries to help themselves.¹

The most notable achievement of the United Nations in this field has been in the provision of technical experts, training and demonstration equipment to the under-developed countries. In 1950 the expanded programme of technical assistance was undertaken, to finance which 55 countries pledged the equivalent of \$20,070,260 for an 18-month period ending December 31, 1951. For the second period of 12 months \$18,795,355 was pledged by 65 countries, and for the third period (1953) 67 governments pledged \$21,278,575. Canadian contributions for each of these periods were \$772,727, \$750,000, and \$800,000 respectively.² Within the framework of the Colombo Plan, Canada has also made available \$400,000 each year over the past three years for technical assistance to South and Southeast Asia.

During the first financial period of the expanded programme, which of necessity was devoted largely to organization and planning, actual provision of assistance somewhat lagged behind the financial resources available, but during 1952 the programme gained momentum and at the end of the year 97 countries and territories had received technical assistance, 62 had received the services of experts and the nationals of 92 different countries had been awarded fellowships and scholarships. By 1953, the problem had become one of making the most effective use of resources to meet the increasing volume of requests for help. Experience has shown the importance of providing equipment and training on the spot in the recipient countries, so that the maximum number of people may benefit.

From 1950 to June 1953 Canada provided training facilities for 177 fellows and scholars under the United Nations Programme, and 116 under the Colombo Plan. During the same period Canada provided almost 150 experts for United Nations technical assistance projects and 24 under the Colombo Plan. Requests for technical assistance from Canada are handled by the Technical Co-operation Service of the Department of Trade and Commerce.

¹See *Canada and the United Nations 1951-52*, pp. 45-51 and 54-56.

²Figures are given in United States dollars.