

These grants, hon. members of the House — and I say this from the bottom of my being — are not hand-outs. We should really think of them as helping hands. There is another feature, members of the House, about our investment in the Colombo Plan: Famine, distress and low standards of living create the seed-beds of unrest and indeed could create — and in some instances have done so — the seed-bed of war. It worries me to talk in this vein, but if anyone wants to talk about these matters in mere monetary terms, I would offer a good argument and, I think, a conclusive one that in time these countries in which we are making investments will become good customers and provide much opportunity for Canada. But I put that suggestion forward in second or third place.

As some hon. members of this House know, particularly the hon. member for Algoma East (Mr. Pearson), the Colombo Plan was a concept initiated and brought about in the Commonwealth. Here is another instance of the Commonwealth creating a nucleus which in due course produced a strengthened, forward-looking and beneficial international enterprise. In the routine aspect of carrying forward the programme under the Colombo Plan there always has had to be and there will have to be discussions with engineers, administrators and economists. Then there will have to be discussions with the countries to whom help might be offered, as to their needs. When decisions in that regard are made, Mr. Speaker, we will of course report to the House.

On November 22 in this session of Parliament the Prime Minister informed the House that the Government will seek Parliamentary approval of an appropriation for 1958-59 of \$35 million. The estimates that will be considered in a few days provide for a contribution of \$34,400,000. We are proposing an increase of \$600,000 for 1958-59.

International Commissions in Indochina

Time does not permit me to go into detail with respect to other parts of South and South-East Asia but in passing I would refer to the work of the International Commissions in Indochina. The task of the Commission in Cambodia is, in our opinion, about completed. There have been difficulties in the way of dissolving or disbanding the Commission. In Laos, where we are members of an international commission, after nearly three years of negotiations between the Royal Government and the Pathet Lao, an agreement has finally been reached whereby the Pathet Lao, which has been controlling one part of Laos, will be integrated into the national community. I seize this opportunity to say that we sympathize with the desire of the Laotian people to achieve a political settlement within the terms of the Geneva Agreements of 1954. We hope that this latest development will result in a strong Laos and a continuation of the democratic approach that has been followed by the Royal Government.

Vietnam remains divided. It is in this area where the sort of international supervision that is provided by the International Commissions has been most important for the maintenance of peace.

In relation to South and South-East Asia I would reiterate what I have endeavoured to say, namely that the recent visits of Ministers of the Government to that part of the world should be taken as indicative of our interest in the area, our close interest in Commonwealth ties, our desire to help the countries of the area to improve their standard of living and of our willingness to do our part in preserving peace.