

# The Colombo Plan: A Progress Report

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*On May 3 the Administrator, International Economic and Technical Co-operation Division, Department of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Nik Cavell, reported to the Standing Committee on External Affairs, House of Commons, on Canada's Colombo Plan participation as follows:*

At my appearance before you last year I told you that generally speaking our aid programme to South-East Asia was going forward in a satisfactory way. I put before you the efforts the various countries of that area were making to help themselves. Actually something between 85 and 90 per cent of their total development effort is being borne by these countries, poor as they are, and you will perhaps remember that I outlined to you some of the assistance we were giving to help them to better themselves. I told you then that in this endeavour we had inaugurated 38 projects and that a number of others were under discussion. The total number of our capital projects, large and small, has now mounted to 60, in addition to which there is a certain amount of equipment which has been provided under technical co-operation in an endeavour to make our experts in the field under the technical co-operation programme more efficient and therefore more productive.

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## Technical Assistance

I would like to start first with the Technical Co-operation programme. Last year when I was before you I talked about our work in India, Pakistan and Ceylon, but you will remember that we received an extra million dollars last year which was to be spent on technical assistance in the new countries which had joined the Colombo Plan but had received no assistance from Canada. These were Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and Indochina . . .

I would like to point out that we are training young people and we are bringing them here in increasing numbers and exposing them to our democratic way of life. We do all we can for them and send them back, but it will be some years before we can evaluate their usefulness, and more and more we realize that they are exactly like our own young people—some are brilliant, some do an average job and a small percentage are failures. But all the time I feel we are adding slowly but surely to the technical skills, agricultural, medical and other knowledge which these countries must have if they are to better the lot of their people. After residence with us here in a free and democratic society which has raised the standards of its own people to about the highest in the world, they certainly go back with a very different point of view from that which they hold when they arrive. We hope that their influence will be very considerable for at least 20 years to come, which will be their average working life.

Our greatest difficulty is to find the fields in which we can best help. To aid us in this we send our research missions composed of the best men we can find in their field, or in some cases we send individuals who have had teaching or technical experience here in Canada, and they go to one or two countries