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CANADA AND THE COLOMBO PLAN

The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia will soon be celebrating its tenth anniversary. It was brought into being at a meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers held at Colombo in February 1950. Established on the initiative of Commonwealth governments, it expanded rapidly to encompass countries of the whole area and, on the donor side, to include the United States and Japan. Aid under the Colombo Plan falls into two broad categories: technical co-operation and development assistance.

The Colombo Plan is characterized by the co-operative nature of its endeavours and by the flexibility of its organizational structure. There being no central machinery, aid projects are generally negotiated and carried out on a bilateral basis. Some projects, however, do involve several countries, as donors, or recipients, or both. The Plan has a small Bureau in Colombo which deals with technical co-operation and information matters. Heads of missions of Colombo Plan countries in Ceylon also meet periodically to discuss matters arising in the context of the technical co-operation scheme. The Consultative Committee, which is composed of ministers of member countries, meets annually to exchange views on the nature and scope of the Colombo Plan and to review its impact on the economic development of the area.

The philosophy underlying Canadian participation in the Plan was summed up by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. John G. Diefenbaker, in an address on June 29, 1958, when he said that:

"The good citizen and the good nation must recognize his obligations to the broad community of man".

Mr. Diefenbaker went on to explain the concept of the interdependence of nations in the following words:

"While we have our duty to ourselves and our special relationship to our families and our neighbours, more and more, we, as Canadians and citizens of the world, must seek to share the problems of every continent. We have much to give to other peoples, particularly those in less fortunate lands, but we have also much to learn from them. There cannot be friendship and understanding between the continents, if we in the Western world arrogantly assume a monopoly of skills and wisdom or that we must try to make all other peoples conform to