



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 51/50 THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF UNDER-DEVELOPED AREAS

Text of a statement at the Sixth Session of the United Nations General Assembly by Mr. Maurice Bourget, M.P., Canadian Representative on the Second Committee, made at Paris on November 27, 1951.

The agenda items which we are dealing with in this general debate all relate to the task of raising the level of production and the standards of living of the peoples of the under-developed countries of the world. This task is perhaps the biggest challenge to the conscience and ingenuity of the members of this Committee. The Canadian Delegation has listened with sympathetic interest to the eloquent pleas that have been made in this session by the spokesmen of such countries for an understanding of their problems. We recognize that there is no simple solution to such problems and that measures that have been appropriate in the past in the more industrialized countries of the world are not always appropriate in the case of many of the under-developed countries. Sheer poverty in some areas has created conditions under which it is impossible for such countries to produce more than enough to maintain the barest necessities for their sustenance, leaving no margin for the saving and investment and the development of skills that are necessary to improve living standards.

Nevertheless, we must also admit that important steps have been taken by the United Nations itself and in other independent collective or bilateral ways to give meaning to the recognition of the simple fact that all of us have responsibility for helping each other and, in particular, for narrowing the gap in standards of living which separates one group of countries from the other. If we consider, for example, the steps that have been taken in this direction since the General Assembly last met here, in Paris, in 1948, it will be seen that the problems have not been neglected. On the contrary, a number of new and unprecedented measures to alleviate the economic imbalance which exists between the various areas of the world have been taken during the last three years.

Foremost among these has been the establishment of the Technical Assistance Programme. The Canadian Delegation has listened with great interest to the tributes that have been paid to this programme from many countries who have begun to benefit from it and we think that this Committee should feel enormously encouraged by the progress that has been made so far. Last year, great advances were reflected both in the size and implementation of the programme and in the responsible way in which it was received by the recipient countries. We feel that this programme is a great practical achievement. Its development by ECOSOC has shown imaginative wisdom and foresight.