

External Affairs in Parliament

Expansion of Assistance Programme

The following statement was made to the House of Commons on November 14 by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin:

I should like to make an announcement on a subject which I am sure will be of considerable interest to the House and to the Canadian people. I refer to Canada's programme of economic assistance for the developing nations of the world. The record demonstrates, I think, that since 1950, when Canada was one of the founding members of the Colombo Plan, Canadian Governments have regularly reviewed the adequacy of their aid programmes and have made provision for increases whenever national circumstances permitted. Last year only was a reduction made in the level of our assistance as part of a general programme to reduce expenditures in every area of government activities.

When the present Government took office, it became increasingly apparent that, because of the changing framework of international assistance, a fresh look was required at our international aid effort. The requirements of the developing countries are urgent and growing, and economic assistance for them has become an established policy of all of the advanced nations of the free world, which have recognized the need to co-operate in assisting to the best of their ability those countries in the process of economic development.

Accordingly, our Canadian aid effort cannot be viewed in isolation but rather as part of a broad collective effort. We would be failing in our responsibilities both to the developing countries and to other advanced countries with which we are associated, if we did not ensure that Canada played its proper role in this common aid effort.

As an integral part of our foreign policy, our Canadian aid programmes have, I am convinced, the broad support of the Canadian people. By sharing our resources, skills and experiences, we not only benefit others but also help to expand and enrich our own experiences. Our aid programmes provide a stimulus to the domestic economy and contribute to a betterment of employment conditions, since the main part of our aid funds is spent in Canada to purchase Canadian goods and services required in the developing countries.

Taking all these factors into account, the Canadian Government has now formulated general plans for an expansion of Canada's aid programmes, beginning in the fiscal year 1964-65.

The main proposed area of expansion would be in special Canadian lending for development purposes. If Canada is to be in a position to provide assistance on terms commensurate with the needs of recipient countries, consistent with the agreed objectives of international bodies of which we are a member, and in line