

**U.N. TECHNICAL AID:** Canada this year will increase from \$800,000 to \$1,500,000 her contribution to the United Nations programme of technical assistance to materially underdeveloped countries, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, announced in the House of Commons on February 10.

His statement came during a debate on a member's resolution asking the Government to "consider the advisability of introducing legislation at this session to substantially increase Canada's contribution to the United Nations technical assistance organization fund". Members of all parties spoke in support of the resolution.

Some excerpts from Mr. Pearson's speech were:

"At the United Nations we are often reminded by Asian and African speakers that Asia and Africa are on the march, and that they will not be stopped. That of course is true; and there is no reason why we should want to stop them. But we should of course do our best to assist that march toward peaceful co-operation and free progress. And the kind of work referred to in the resolution is one way in which we can help direct that march in the right direction. That is why the subject is such an important one....

"The Canadian contribution to technical assistance has been exceeded only by that of the United Kingdom, the United States and France in the past. If Parliament votes the amount... Canada's contribution will be the third largest of the members of the United Nations. I do not think that is anything we should say boastfully, but it does at least show we are playing a respectable part in this very important effort.

"We are also playing a part not only in the contribution of funds but in the contribution of experts through the United Nations. In Canada today there are 217 United Nations technical assistance trainees out of a total of 300; the rest of them come under the Colombo plan programme. And there are 96 Canadian experts now serving abroad in the United Nations....

"In conclusion I would like to express my agreement with the spirit and indeed the content of this resolution, and to emphasize that we are doing something to carry out the advice contained in it. I also express the hope that it will commend itself to all hon. members in this House because, as has been said more than once, the war on want and backwardness, on deprivation and distress, is a road to peace."

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Both consumption and supplies of new coal available for consumption in Canada were moderately lower in 1952 than in the preceding year, according to the Bureau's annual report on the coal mining industry. At the same time there were declines in domestic production, exports and imports.

**CULTURAL AGREEMENT:** The Department of External Affairs announced on February 13 that a cultural agreement has been concluded between Canada and Italy. The agreement came into force through an exchange of notes at Rome between the Canadian Ambassador to Italy and the Foreign Minister of Italy.

In accordance with the terms of a previous settlement of Canadian "blocked balances" in Italy, the Government of Italy will deposit with a Canadian foundation, to be established in Rome, the equivalent of \$500,000 (Canadian) in Italian Government bonds, bearing interest at the rate of 5%. Interest from the bonds, amounting to approximately the equivalent of \$25,000 (Canadian) annually, would be used in Italy for Canadian cultural activities including the provision of scholarships and fellowships for Canadians who wish to pursue studies or research in Italy.

The agreement gives the Government of Italy the right to maintain, at its own expense, an Italian cultural institute in Montreal. The purposes and functions of this institute would be generally similar to those of the Canadian foundation in Rome.

In general the two Governments agree to co-operate closely in order that the citizens of each country may know and understand better the people, the institutions, and the cultural life of the other. Thus, they will encourage the exchange of scientific and technical publications and material of an educational nature.

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**RECORD AUTO SALES IN 1953:** Last year Canadians bought more new cars than ever before and the smallest number of new trucks since 1949, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reported February 11. Combined sales reached an all-time high of 461,887, up 15% from 400,777 in 1952 and more than four times the 114,747 sold in 1939. The 1953 total was 7.5% above the previous peak of 429,695 sold in 1950.

A 23% jump in the number of new cars sold, to 358,661 from 292,095 in 1952, more than offset a 5% drop in commercial vehicle sales to 103,226 from 108,682. More new passenger cars were bought in all provinces, percentage increases ranging from 11% in Prince Edward Island to 37.5% in Newfoundland.

Retail value of new motor vehicles climbed 16% in 1953 to a record \$1,161,660,756 from \$1,003,662,341 in 1952, with advances everywhere except in Prince Edward Island. New car sales were valued at \$898,628,285, a gain of 24% from \$725,167,630, while new commercial vehicle sales were valued at \$263,032,711, a 6% drop.

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Wholesale sales were slightly higher in value in December than in the corresponding month of 1952, and the Bureau's index, on the 1935-39 base, moved up to 344.4 from 340.8.