



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 55/18 An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, to the Conference of United Nations Associations in Canada, at Ottawa, May 27, 1955.

This is, I believe, a unique meeting in Canada.

Not so long ago it would have been virtually impossible to find enough Canadians interested in what then may have seemed to be remote lands to make up a conference of this size and quality. Even if such a meeting could have been assembled, it would certainly not have been possible to hold the kind of serious and informed discussion which you will have over the next day and a half. Although many Canadian missionaries and a few of our businessmen had been in close touch with important aspects of life in these industrially backward countries, we did not until very recently have much familiarity with the problems of economic development confronting the people there; problems which took new forms and became even more acute with the "revolution of rising expectations" which accompanied the achievement of political independence and national life following the war.

We now have a considerable amount of experience on which to draw. For the past four or five years Canada, and a good number of Canadians personally - many of whom are here today - have been cooperating actively with the people of these countries in the development of their economies through the United Nations and its agencies and under the Colombo Plan. It is well that at this stage we should pause to take stock - or, better still, take stock without pausing which is what I see you are doing by having these meetings at the week-end!

I shall not attempt to foreshadow what you will hear from those who have been administering these programmes or actually working in the field. Neither will I venture to forecast what your conclusions will be at the end of your meetings. I would merely like to mention at this stage some of the general considerations which you may wish to have in mind as your discussions proceed.

There have been a great number and variety of estimates of the amount of outside assistance needed by the materially under-developed countries. There has also been considerable public discussion in Canada concerning the size of the contribution which we should be making, particularly in Asia. Questions of priority and proportion in the allocation of national revenues are always among the most difficult that governments have to face. I think we are at least all agreed that the needs are very large and that Canada should be doing its part to meet here. I believe also that all Canadians can take real satisfaction from what we are in fact doing;