

The desire for a more distinct national identity and this new sense of the importance of the individual present a great challenge to the new Asian nations of our Commonwealth. One of the most important tasks with which they are faced at the present time is to assure an adequate supply of food, clothing, and shelter to meet the minimum basic needs of their many millions of human beings. It is by assisting them to meet this challenge, and at the same time encouraging them in their effort to achieve the goals I have mentioned, that we can demonstrate our friendship and goodwill toward them. Even before my recent tour, I had frequently asserted that we could not afford to overlook these vast areas of Asia, where mass poverty prevails and where there is not much use in talking about the abstract advantages of political freedom to men and women who are perpetually hungry.

If we hope to have real security in the world -- and unless it is world-wide we are not apt to have it for ourselves -- I am convinced we must, in a true spirit of equality and co-operation, join in a world-wide concerted effort to help the peoples of Asia secure greater material advantages and the hope of a better future for themselves.

One of the ways -- and there are several both official and non-official ways -- in which we in the West are helping our Asian friends is through the Colombo Plan. I was told that the assistance that we have given under that Plan to Pakistan, India and Ceylon over the past three years is of outstanding importance at this stage in their development.

A basic feature of the Colombo Plan is that the recipients themselves choose the projects on which the funds are to be spent. Of course, there are consultations at every level, and the government which is supplying the funds for a particular project must feel that it is justified in spending taxes paid by the people it represents in the way that is suggested. But it has been agreed, and it is accepted in practice, that the Asian peoples themselves should decide how the monies can best be spent to serve the purposes of the Plan.

Another important feature of the Plan is that, as far as possible, assistance should not be a temporary expedient which would at most afford relief of a temporary situation, though a lot of that has had to be done and has been done. But as a general policy each contribution is made with the aim of enabling the recipients eventually to improve their facilities to meet their own needs. Otherwise this assistance would do nothing but help meet the temporary emergency and would not really contribute towards the higher productivity the peoples of these nations must achieve for themselves.

In Pakistan, for one instance, we are helping to construct a cement plant. At a cost of about five million dollars a plant and machinery will be manufactured in Canada and erected at Thal by a Canadian contractor. The entire project will be completed in two years and the annual production of 100,000 metric tons of cement will be used to provide housing and irrigation