

Supply—External Affairs

follow the pattern, but certainly I should think it might be wise to try the experiment of referring the departmental estimates of three or four departments to select standing or special committees for studying. Because it seems to me that when the estimates are studied by a committee, where witnesses can be examined, conclusions drawn and recommendations made to the government in a report, a very thorough job can be done—more thorough than in the way in which we deal with estimates normally.

Of course I am not so optimistic as to think that a report sent back to the government from a committee will attain anything very startling, because the inclination on the part of the heavily weighted government committees is to avoid any recommendations or suggestions that might be slightly critical of government policy. For that reason I do not think that the reports would be of tremendous value, but certainly the study itself of the estimates would be.

In the course of our studies this year, most able and interesting witnesses came before us. We appreciated them all; and if we mention some of them particularly, it is only because their work in the field of duty is more interesting to us than were the others. We called before us Mr. Nik Cavell, who is the head of the international economic and technical co-operation division of the Department of Trade and Commerce and administrator of the Canadian participation in the Colombo plan. Mr. Cavell's evidence was not only intensely interesting, but it was most valuable to the whole committee. Through him we learned about the many valuable projects that are being carried on under the Colombo plan and the technical assistance branches in Ceylon, India and Pakistan. We learned that Canada is participating in some very worth-while projects. From the evidence which we were able to get, I would judge that up until recently, at any rate, the countries contributing to the Colombo plan were putting up just about as much money as could efficiently and readily be used by India, Pakistan and Ceylon. However, I think that we are emerging from that position now, and as more engineers and technicians are available, and as experience accumulates, and, further, as these countries that have been looked upon as underdeveloped in the past are able to build up their own productive capacities, more money for capital certainly could be used. Then, under the plans that I have mentioned, I think it is important for us now to consider increasing the amount of capital in both technical assistance and the Colombo plan. The sum of \$25 million is what we have been giving each year under the Colombo plan.

[Mr. Low.]

That will not go very far in the development of the worth-while Colombo projects in which Canada is participating at the present time.

I mention this work in particular because I thought that what the minister said this afternoon is perfectly correct. I think he affirmed his belief that the problems in Asia cannot be solved by military action alone. That is true; I believe that. The Colombo plan and the technical assistance work are two means by which we can help and supplement whatever else might have to be done. I think that these two ideas were well conceived. In my judgment, the best help we can possibly extend to any underdeveloped people or to any underdeveloped country is the kind of help that will enable them to help themselves. Those countries need power development schemes; great pumping stations for lifting waters out of the rivers and into irrigation canals so that it can be put on the land in various parts of their countries. They need improved and more efficient transportation systems that will make it possible for much more efficient productive enterprises and commerce to be carried on. They need improved fishing techniques and equipment to make available the protein foods from the sea, and with these things more cold storage plants that can properly take care of the fish when they are caught. All of these things, and perhaps many more, are the type of things that need to be developed in those countries. To a very large degree they are being done and done very commendably under the Colombo plan.

Mr. Cavell's evidence indicated that already projects which had been under development for some years in India and Pakistan especially are showing their results in increased production of foodstuffs. Last year, for example, for the first time in many years, we were told that India found it possible to provide the necessary food for her people without having to buy abroad. Of course we realize that the past season was a good crop season, but the various community projects under India's five-year plan, assisted by Colombo and the technical assistance program, have done much to increase production of food in that country.

It is reasonable to expect that within a matter of 30 years or 40 years it will be possible, with help from the western countries, to bring up the productive capacity of these three commonwealth countries to the point where those areas will be able to feed their great population on a reasonable level of good nutrition.

Indeed, Mr. Cavell, in his evidence, suggested that we would have to consider the Colombo and technical assistance plans as