

partition of the country itself caused serious economic dislocation. In Malaya, Burma, Indo-China and Indonesia, political disturbances and terrorist activities hindered normal recovery.

Much has been done in the past six or seven years towards restoring the shattered economies of South and Southeast Asia to their pre-war levels but much more must be done. The peoples of these countries are no longer satisfied to eke out a bare existence for themselves and their children in the conditions of poverty and misery which were the lot of their fathers and forefathers. Most of these countries have gained their independence since the war and governments and people alike are determined to match their political progress with economic and social improvement.

The region is rich in natural resources and the main source of supply for several key products in international trade. Before the war it provided almost all the world's exports of jute and rubber, more than three-quarters of the tea, two-thirds of the tin and one-third of the oils and fats.

Tremendous Effort Required

It is clear that if the great wealth of the countries of South and Southeast Asia is to be developed for their benefit and for that of the whole world, a tremendous and sustained effort is required. The task must, in the main, be carried out by the countries themselves under the leadership of their own governments. This challenge has indeed already been accepted. Most of the governments concerned have worked out national development plans to be implemented in stages over a five or six-year period. With or without external assistance these development programmes will be carried forward but to the extent that the richer and more economically developed countries provide help, especially at the beginning, progress will be that much more rapid.

This is where the Colombo Plan comes in. It is not in itself adequate to provide for the scale of development which is desirable and indeed essential. It can, however, make a significant contribution

and is doing so by supplying urgently needed capital aid and technical assistance to fit in with the programmes which the receiving countries themselves are carrying out. It should also be of indirect benefit in encouraging financial assistance from other sources, for as the development plans become realities the economy of the area will be to that extent strengthened, production increased and living standards raised. The process is bound to be gradual but as conditions improve and stability is maintained, it would be natural to expect that private capital will move in greater amounts towards the area.

Two Part Plan

The Colombo Plan can be divided into two separate but closely related parts. These are technical assistance and capital aid. Technical assistance, as is clear from its name, is the sharing with the underdeveloped countries of the advanced knowledge and skills of the industrialized and more developed countries of the world. The idea of international technical assistance on a large scale is relatively new. It began with the United States Point Four Programme, so called because it constituted point four of President Truman's inaugural address to Congress in 1949. It was quickly taken up by the United Nations which organized an expanded programme of technical assistance in the middle of 1950. Colombo Plan technical assistance is supplementary to the United Nations programme in South and Southeast Asia, where the needs are particularly urgent.

Basic Aim

The basic aim of technical assistance is to provide the essential bridge to economic development. It is obvious that the countries of South and Southeast Asia, for example, will never be able to develop their resources if they lack skilled technicians. For limited periods and on a small scale, technical experts might be lent but this would do little if anything to solve the permanent problem caused by a shortage of trained personnel. The solid foundation of economic develop-