

peoples brought with them the skills and aptitudes, and the psychological make-up, which enabled them to share from an early stage the rapid technological and economic development which had begun in Europe. But the effort to build a new nation in North America has also, I think, given us some insight into the problems facing those nations in other parts of the world which have recently attained independence, and have simultaneously embarked with determination on the path of economic and technological development.

In earlier days, the needs of other countries for outside assistance in achieving economic development would have gone largely unnoticed and unheeded. Indeed, it is only in relatively recent times that the conception of collective, governmental action to provide basic social services and stimulate economic development within our own borders has been recognized. From an historical point of view, we may regard the Second World War as the turning-point, which led to the realization, still unfortunately not fully accepted in all quarters, that responsibility for human welfare cannot be limited by political boundaries. During the war, thousands of Canadians fought and died not only for the freedom of their own country but also for the freedom of our allies and for the beliefs which we shared with them. It was only natural that the sense of common purpose which characterized our war effort should be expressed anew in the task of reconstruction, an essentially economic task which required the contribution of material resources from the countries which had suffered least to those which had suffered most.

Amidst the revolutionary changes which took place in the world in the years following 1945, it was borne home to us that the countries which had been devastated by war were not the only ones where people were suffering from poverty and deprivation. First the great nations of Asia, proud heirs to ancient civilizations, and then the peoples of Africa raised their voices, demanding the same freedom and independence that the victorious allies had fought for in the Second World War. Initially, this great revolutionary movement was expressed in essentially political terms, but it soon became clear that the quest for political independence was only the first stage in a much more basic search for a better and more fully satisfying life.

In 1950, Canada met with Britain, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Ceylon to discuss ways of meeting the political, economic and social problems that faced the newly independent Commonwealth countries of South and Southeast Asia. The result was the Colombo Plan, originally conceived as a Commonwealth response to what was regarded as a Commonwealth responsibility. To Canadians, the "new" Commonwealth which emerged in the years following the war was a source of some pride, for it was Canada which had originally pioneered the pattern of national independence within the Commonwealth. Canada was anxious to do what it could to make this "new" Commonwealth, embracing non-European as well as European peoples, a viable conception, and accordingly undertook to assist in the joint development effort which was so clearly needed. It is from that time that we can trace the growth of Canada's programme of aid to the developing countries.