

In view of the firm intention of the Federal Government to ensure that its foreign policy, as well as its aid programmes, reflects the realities of Canadian life, co-operation with French-speaking countries cannot but increase. So far as the development of its administrative facilities (especially the recruitment of qualified officers) permits, and so far as it finds it possible to ensure that available help to recipient countries is efficient and acceptable, the Government of Canada intends to increase its co-operation with developing French-speaking countries as quickly as it can, in order to guarantee the fairest possible allotment of aid between French-speaking areas and others.

A slow start was made. The necessary team had to be organized by the External Aid Office. The shortage of Canadian missions in Africa was, and remains, a handicap we are trying to overcome. We have had to familiarize ourselves with these countries and to develop in them an interest in our aid programmes -- a task that has not always been easy, as these countries are oriented primarily toward their "parent" state, from which they continue to receive significant amounts of technical, financial and military assistance and with which several of them are associated through the European Economic Community. Because of the continuing presence of France, co-operation with that country has had to be developed in the field of aid to the French-speaking nations of Africa. The joint communiqué issued last March, on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister to General de Gaulle, emphasized the desirability of such Franco-Canadian co-operation. It is obviously not a question of competing with France but rather of making a complementary contribution in fields where we may prove useful.

Through our objective and constructive policy in international matters and the very happy relations we have developed with African countries, especially at the United Nations, we have, I believe, acquired their esteem and goodwill. Our missionaries were initiators in that sphere. In the field of teaching, they have been doing for years, and are still doing, excellent work in Africa. It is incumbent on us to-day to supplement their pioneer efforts with the means at our disposal. Your efforts to make more French-speaking Canadians conscious of these problems will, I am sure, bear fruit.

At this conference, you made it a point, as was proper, to concern yourselves with the relations of Canada with French-speaking Africa. The importance you attached to this objective stems from the ties that have united, and will continue to unite, all countries that are associated with the French-speaking community and whose education and culture rest on French traditions. However, it is to be expected that circumstances will prompt Africans to think of their continent in its entirety. In fact, it is already evident that, in their relations with the external world, they regard themselves first of all as Africans. The Organization for African Union, which I mentioned a moment ago, is a tangible expression of this awakening to the consciousness of the African personality. Language is only one factor of differentiation in Africa. Affiliations and tribal loyalties are others. I am sure that Africans will not wish to lose the benefits they reaped from their long association with Europe, which have allowed them to take their place rapidly in the international world. On the other hand, they will not abandon their cherished characteristics.