

No. 54/9

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Statement on technical assistance made in the House of Commons on February 10, 1954, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the discussion of this resolution; and I am also grateful, as I am sure the House is, to the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. MacInnis) for making that possible.

After all, this resolution deals with a subject the long-range importance of which may well be very great indeed for international co-operation, and indeed for international peace. Because, though history does not prove that a nation consisting of people with full stomachs is necessarily a peaceful nation, certainly history does prove that a nation consisting of people with empty stomachs will be a troublesome one.

This purpose of United Nations technical assistance, is to improve material conditions in what, sometimes a little glibly, we call the under-developed countries of the world. I always like to use the expression "materially under-developed" when referring to these countries because, in some ways, they are quite as highly developed as we are.

I agree wholeheartedly with the thoughtful and constructive speeches which have been made by those who have spoken in the debate, especially in the importance that has been attached by the speakers to the problems and possibilities presented to us, in the western world--that west which, as Professor Toynbee has reminded us, is now surrounded by the world. These problems are particularly affected by the emerging importance of Asia into the new world of industry, and of technique, of the atom and the jet.

At the United Nations we are often reminded by Asian and African speakers that Asia and Africa are on the march, and that they will not be stopped. That of course is true; and there is no reason why we should want to stop them. But we should of course do our best to assist that march toward peaceful co-operation and free progress. And the kind of work referred to in the resolution is one way in which we can help direct that march in the right direction. That is why the subject is such an important one.

In its terms, the resolution is restricted to the United Nations technical assistance organization, and suggests that the government--

--should consider the advisability of introducing legislation at this session to substantially increase Canada's contribution to the United Nations technical assistance organization fund.