

VERNMENT



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO  
UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Text of an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, at the Annual Congress of the Co-operative Union of Canada, Ottawa, March 4, 1952.

The first consideration of Canadian foreign policy is the problem of our national security.

A second is the problem of our relationship with the other free countries of the world community -- especially those in Asia -- who have not participated in the material prosperity which has resulted largely from the technological advances we have made in the Western world during the past two hundred years.

More than ever, in a world in which physical distances have so shrunk that countries far away are now our neighbours, the phrase "East and West" implies a cultural and economic rather than a geographical separation. Our association in the Commonwealth of Nations and our membership in the United Nations offers us a bridge of sympathy and understanding to three of these Asian countries. It also gives us a corresponding responsibility to examine with care and urgency the problems of the "have-not" nations of that great and ancient area.

When we in the West speak of improving economic and social conditions in our own countries we think in terms of raising our standards of living. The basic problem of most of the peoples of Asia, however, does not concern the standard of living but how to maintain life itself. Never have so many subsisted on so little. Nearly a thousand million Asians are trying to exist on a diet amounting to only 80 per cent of the pre-war level -- the level of the "hungry East". The daily ration in rice in some urban areas has shrunk to five or six ounces per person as compared with the normal pre-war daily consumption of sixteen to eighteen ounces. Since 1945 India's food production has deteriorated. In spite of 165 million people being engaged in agriculture on 170 million acres of land devoted to food crops, the people are living from "ship to mouth".

The real hope of saving the millions of Asians from hunger and hardship depends not upon importing food from abroad but upon increasing the productivity of the lands of their own countries.