

# The Colombo Plan

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**T**HE Colombo Plan is known throughout the world as the Commonwealth's response to the need for economic development in South and South-East Asia. This idea is essentially correct but in certain respects it is an over simplification. The present may be a suitable time at which to recall the way in which the Plan began and developed and the way in which it works.

On October 4 some seventy delegates from the 14 Colombo Plan countries will assemble in Ottawa for the 1954 meeting of the Consultative Committee on Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia—to give the Consultative Committee its full title. This meeting will be preceded by a two-week meeting of officials from Colombo Plan countries commencing September 20. The officials will do the preparatory work for the Consultative Committee meeting and prepare a draft report for consideration by the Committee. The officials will also participate in the meeting of the Committee as advisors to the leaders of their delegations.

## First Meeting in North America

The October meeting will be the first meeting of the Consultative Committee to take place in North America. Canadians will have an unusual opportunity to extend a friendly welcome to distinguished visitors from most of the Commonwealth countries, most of the countries of South and South-East Asia, and the United States. At the same time they will have an equally good opportunity to learn more about the policies and problems, the ways of life and cultures of the less familiar of these countries.

The Consultative Committee will be concerned with urgent down-to-earth questions of an economic and humanitarian kind. At the same time, there will be drama, even a little glamour, in its meetings. It is not every day that Canadians are able to meet representatives from such different and distant lands as Australia, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the United Kingdom (and its dependent territories Brunei, North Borneo, Sarawak, Singapore and the Federation of Malaya), the United States and Viet-Nam. Most of these countries will be represented by Cabinet Ministers, for the Consultative Committee is a committee at the Ministerial level.

Several of these Ministers will be Ministers of Finance or Ministers with similar portfolios who are concerned with economic development; others will be Ministers of External Affairs or Ministers whose responsibilities lie in this field; two or three countries will be represented by their diplomatic representatives in Washington or in Ottawa; and one or two will send senior officials responsible for economic development. The United Kingdom territories will be represented by two Ministers, one from the Federation of Malaya and the other from Singapore. Thailand, and possibly the Philippines, will be represented by observers.

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