

Based on these facts and the talks I had in India with many members of the Government, with one of them on five occasions and with another on four, I cannot believe that we are justified in suggesting that India would ever embrace dialectal materialism as it is projected to us frequently from the Kremlin or from any other source. This is an important consideration in the kind of world in which we live, where some time there may have to be a decision as to which form of society will prevail ultimately. I am satisfied that while there may not always be political affinity there will be what is even more important, a sort of spiritual affinity between these nations of Asia and the basic concepts of Western civilization.

In addition there is another reason for the conclusions I reached. India, Ceylon and Pakistan are deeply dedicated to the democratic form of government and to the parliamentary process. There is no disposition there to accept as efficient or as possible a totalitarian form of government, suppressing, as ultimately that form does, the kind of freedom out of which political maturity can only grow. Of course, that exists in Australia and New Zealand, as it does here. I spend little time on this because it is taken for granted, although in some places on this continent it is not taken for granted that the kind of fundamentals which I have postulated are accepted generally in Asia. I can only say that my belief, and it is a strongly entrenched belief now, is that these principles are widely accepted in India, in Pakistan and in Ceylon.

Colombo Plan

The Colombo Plan came into being in 1951 in Ceylon, in the capital of the country which was the first nation of the Commonwealth in that part of Asia which I visited. I think I can say, whether or not we all agree on the extent of the contributions made, that having in mind that the old world extracted from the great Asian land mass much of the wealth of that continent in another day, oftentimes for its own benefit, nothing is more salutary in our time, I believe, than the fact that now the Western nations of the British Commonwealth, in association with nations in Asia, have joined together for the purpose of promoting the improvement of the economic and social life of the people of Asia. It is a hopeful sign for the improvement of international relations between certain nations of the West and that section of the world that it should be possible for nations like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and the United States to share some of their skills and some of their resources according to their capacity with nations whose material standards of life admittedly are not as high as their own. I am firmly of the view that to the extent we follow this course we will be making an important contribution to the peace of the world.

I realize that one must be practical and realistic about the extent to which any nation can go. But, Mr. Speaker, I could not refrain from saying these things to this House, when I think of the hospitals I have visited, the maternity centres I have visited, the eye centres I have seen, the need for medical schools and hospitals and the like. I cannot help but feel that we, through the Colombo Plan, are really making a useful contribution in the kind of assistance which we are able to give. I saw a doctor in Chittagong, in East Pakistan, only 10 days ago, who had received his degree as an ophthalmologist at the University of Montreal under the Colombo Plan. He was the only eye specialist in that part of the country. I saw before him some 300 cases of glaucoma that might have gone without treatment if it had not been for the fact that he had received training under the Colombo Plan and in this particular case through Canada.