

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today, at this Annual Conference of the Co-operators Insurance Association.

It is hardly necessary for me to tell you of the important part which the co-operative movement plays in our economy and our democratic society. Co-operation is a good deal more than a method of doing business. It is a way of life which recognizes that the welfare of each is the welfare of all.

Through the co-operative way, by joining hands with others -- regardless of their race or creed or class -- it is possible for all to help themselves, materially and morally, to a better and finer standard of life.

At this point in history, when so many of the world's peoples are actively aspiring to a better life, the co-operative movement is of particular significance. I am thinking especially of the peoples in the developing countries, who are suffering from the effects of poverty and backwardness. Many of the developing countries have recognized the relevance of co-operatives in their attempts to evolve new social and economic structures, appropriate to the modern world, and to the greatly increased aspirations of their peoples.

The purposes and goals which inspire the co-operative movement in Canada lead naturally to a willingness and a desire on the part of Canadian co-operators to share their experience and knowledge with the people of the developing countries. Assistance in the development of co-operatives has thus become an important aspect of the Canadian Government's external aid programme.

In the early nineteen-sixties, the External Aid Office set up special group programmes for training in co-operatives, to accommodate the increased members who were coming to Canada to seek