

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Address by Mr. Escott Reid, High Commissioner for Canada in India, at the final plenary session of the United Nations Association's Conference on Canadian Aid to Under-Developed Countries, Ottawa, May 28, 1955

I am very glad to have this opportunity within a week of my return to Canada on home leave to speak to this conference. It gives me a chance to say to this representative group of Canadian citizens: first, how happy I am after two and a half years' absence to be home again in Ottawa; secondly, how proud I have been to be the representative of Canada in India; and, thirdly, how grateful I am to the government and people of India for the warm welcome they have given my family and myself and the innumerable courtesies and kindnesses they have shown us.

I should like to develop each of these three points but I won't. If I did there wouldn't be time for me to say anything about Canadian aid to under-developed countries.

I come from the most important under-developed democratic country in the world - India. It lies alongside the most important under-developed communist country in the world - China. One is a country of almost 400 million people. The other is a country of about 600 million. Here is being played before our eyes one of the greatest dramas in the history of the world. The protagonists are the two most populous nations the world has ever known. They are the two nations of the world which possess the most ancient continuous cultures the world has ever known. They are both potentially great powers. Each is conducting warfare in its own territory against the ancient enemies of mankind - poverty, disease, and ignorance. One protagonist in the drama has embraced communism and totalitarian rule. The other protagonist is determined to achieve its economic and social revolution by democratic methods.

The drama is exciting for us because the future of our own Western World will be profoundly affected by its outcome.

If you should go to India and travel up and down the country as I have done, you will, I think, find the drama of India's development deeply moving not merely because of this but also because on the outcome of the drama depends the happiness of people you have seen and met and talked to. The villagers who have welcomed you into their mud houses. The refugees from East Pakistan who have built a new spick-and-span settlement for themselves on the outskirts of Calcutta. The workmen in the factory for making glass bangles who get so much pleasure out of making some especially intricate glass novelties for you. The friends of your children and the children of your friends.