

Canada is probably as experienced as any country on earth in power development. That is where development starts. Without power nothing much can be done, and so you will not be surprised to hear that power development projects have figured largely in our programme. Because the development of hydro-electric power involves the building of dams for the storage of the necessary water, this type of project serves two purposes: power is generated and irrigation is provided at the same time. Irrigation is a vital factor in the development of South-East Asia; it provides the means of a reasonable assurance of two, and sometimes three, crops a year against the uncertainty of even one when dependent entirely upon rainfall, which all too frequently fails. Such failures have given rise to terrible famines throughout Asian history and these famines have resulted in literally millions of deaths from starvation. Gradually, these conditions are being overcome and these countries are working towards the day when they will grow enough food to feed their people without the drain of finding foreign funds to purchase food abroad.

The aid field is by no means an easy one in which to work. What we have to try to do is to adapt advanced Western techniques to Asian conditions, which is not always easy for Western-trained engineers. For instance, during the four months' visit to South-East Asia from which I have just returned, I saw such things as our atomic reactor - perhaps the most modern piece of equipment one could build today - being erected by hundreds of women carrying cement up ramps in baskets on their heads -- a method of construction thousands of years old. But with a huge unemployed population, every chance must be taken to give employment.

The very fact that we are carrying out these projects some 3,000 miles away makes them difficult, but we are getting them done - the Mayurakshi Project in West Bengal is a good instance. This project will enable 400,000 tons of food to be grown by irrigation, will generate 4,000 kw. of electricity and be a major contribution to what was a very poor area made poorer by a particularly unruly river now under control. The electrical generating equipment which we supplied will be used to make electricity for a large range of cottage industries which will give employment to cultivators when they cannot get on the land. It will also make possible a large amount of agricultural pumping and the processing of much agricultural food. And so I could go on talking of other similar irrigation and electrical generation plants: UMTRU in Assam, KUNDAH in the Nilgiri Hills of South India, DIESEL SETS which will generate in small towns and large villages not now near a grid system. Then these towns and villages are linked to a grid, these diesel sets can be passed along to other communities and thus serve as stop-gap power in many places where otherwise development would be seriously retarded.