



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND THE COLOMBO PLAN

Partial text of an address by Mr. R.G. Nik Cavell, Administrator, International Economic and Technical Co-operation Division, Department of Trade and Commerce, delivered at a joint meeting of the Canadian Importers and Traders Association, Canadian Exporters Association and Canadian Institute of International Affairs, in Toronto, October 5, 1951.

It was very kind of you to invite me here today and to give me this wonderful opportunity to put before you the objectives of the Colombo Plan as a whole and explain to you, - so far as I am able after only a very short period in charge of it - what Canada's contribution is and what steps have been, and are being, taken by this country to make her contribution in aid to Asia not only liberal, which I think it is, but also as effective as careful planning can make it.

... The realization of self-government for the peoples of South-East Asia particularly, has at long last enabled them to make an entirely new approach to their terrible poverty and continual hunger. There are 570 million people in this area and the majority of them are members of the Commonwealth which should give us a special concern for them.

It was this consideration which led to the formation of the Colombo Plan.

The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers met at Colombo, Ceylon, in January 1950. The meeting was unique in several ways. The Ministers assembled for the purpose of reviewing "the international situation, including the world economic aspects". It was a first Conference of all Commonwealth Foreign Ministers, and the first occasion on which the Ministers of the new Asian dominions - India, Pakistan and Ceylon were taken into the inner councils of Commonwealth co-operation and afforded an opportunity of expressing their views on their own problems. It was the first full Commonwealth Ministers' conference ever convened in Asia.

The Conference decided to set up a Consultative Committee, its membership was drawn from 7 countries - United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Canada. The Committee voted unanimously to invite the United States to join and the United States accepted. The Committee was charged with the economic problems of South-East Asia and preparing recommendations. Its first meeting took place in Sydney, Australia, in May 1950. Its next meeting was in London in September 1950. It met again in Colombo in February this year and it will meet again in January but where is not yet certain.