

Colombo Plan Consultative Committee

TWELFTH ANNUAL MEETING

THE Consultative Committee on Economic Development in South and South-east Asia, at which ministers representing all the countries participating in the Colombo Plan meet to review progress and survey the tasks ahead, held its annual meeting in Tokyo from November 14 to 17, 1960. This was the twelfth meeting of the Committee. The Canadian delegation was led by Mr. Angus MacLean, Minister of Fisheries.

One of the main tasks of the Consultative Committee at each of its annual meetings is to adopt a report on Colombo Plan activities during the year drawn up by officials of all member countries at a special meeting immediately preceding that of the Ministers. It consists of two general chapters reviewing economic progress and surveying coming tasks, a series of chapters examining in greater detail the economic position of each country in the Colombo Plan area, a chapter on technical co-operation and another describing the contributions of economic and technical assistance by member countries.

At the Tokyo meeting, the Consultative Committee was able to note that very heartening progress had been made in the year under review. The report records a marked improvement in the export earnings of Colombo Plan countries as a whole, increases in agricultural production and a substantial rise in industrial production. Notwithstanding the improvement that had taken place, however, the Committee took account of the many problems that continued to exist in South and Southeast Asia. The annual report emphasized the long-term nature of the economic development effort in the Colombo Plan area and pointed out that there were no short-cuts to success in this endeavour.

In accordance with a decision taken at the eleventh meeting of the Consultative Committee, in 1959, countries were asked to provide information on population trends for the 1960 meeting; a special section of the annual report adopted at Tokyo discusses population problems. The Colombo Plan area is very densely populated, containing about one-quarter of the population of the earth. Some countries of the region have a difficult problem maintaining a rate of economic growth greater than their rate of population increase, and in certain of these countries measures have been taken to retard the rate of population growth. The Consultative Committee noted, however, that the basic need to stimulate investment and to raise production remained.

The total value of external aid to Colombo Plan countries during the previous year, as reported to the Consultative Committee, was \$1,750 million. Canada's contribution was \$50 million. About 4,300 training awards were made and more than 500 experts provided. An interesting feature of the chapter of the