



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 67/29

OVERCOMING THE WORLD FOOD PROBLEM

A Speech by the Honourable Paul Martin,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
at the Young World Food and Development
Seminar, Toronto, September 15, 1967.

I cannot commend too highly the purpose which brings us here today and the individuals who have made this conference possible. One of the greatest forces in the world today is the strength and vitality of our young people. One of the greatest challenges, as awesome in its way as the threat of nuclear destruction, is the spectre of a world that cannot feed itself. The sponsors of this conference and of the regional seminars which have preceded it, have found a practical way of bringing the vitality, enthusiasm and idealism of youth to bear upon the problem of hunger in the world.

This has been the centennial project of Massey-Ferguson and it has enhanced a proud Canadian name. No finer way could have been found to celebrate our country's hundredth birthday.

The success of this conference will be seen in the stimulation of agricultural activity in all parts of the world and will represent another major achievement in the solid record of progress established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. I well remember that day, almost 22 years ago, when the constitution of the FAO was signed in Quebec, based on the hope of the Atlantic Charter that a peace would be established which would afford assurance that all men in all lands might live out their lives in freedom from want. It was a brave hope. It has not yet been realized.

Despite billions of dollars spent on foreign aid and gifts of food, despite the energy and dedication of such organizations as the Freedom-from-Hunger Campaign, and despite years of activity by all the international agencies which have applied themselves to this field, the fact remains that there are more hungry mouths in the world today than ever before in history.

Malnutrition is the dark angel which hovers today over millions of young children in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It appears before their birth and carries them to an early grave, with hunger their constant companion in the years between. Famine strikes all too frequently upon the plains of Asia. We can admire the fact that hungry nations have made progress in the last 22 years; were they not handicapped by crippling difficulties, they could take great forward strides.