

# *Colombo Plan Consultative Committee*

TENTH CONFERENCE, KUALA LUMPUR

**E**ACH year representatives of the governments that participate in the Colombo Plan meet to review progress under the Plan and to examine the tasks ahead. Last year, the "Consultative Committee of the Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia", as it is called, met in Kuala Lumpur, capital of the Federation of Malaya, from November 13 to 17, 1961. The Canadian delegation was headed by Mr. David Walker, Minister of Public Works. In addition to the 21 members of the Colombo Plan, observers were present from the Republic of Korea and from several international agencies concerned with economic development.

This was a particularly significant meeting of the Consultative Committee, because the year 1961 marked the tenth anniversary of the Colombo Plan. In addition to its normal annual review, therefore, the Committee also attempted to assess the effort that has been made over the past ten years through co-operative economic development under the Colombo Plan to combat poverty and raise living standards in South and Southeast Asia. The Committee had before it a report prepared in the course of a meeting of officials from the various member countries preceding the Ministerial Meeting.

## **A Decade of Development**

The tenth annual report of the Consultative Committee records a significant expansion of output in the countries of South and Southeast Asia over the past decade. The introduction of modern techniques and other measures have increased agricultural production by 12.5 per cent in the area as a whole, and the production of rice, the staple food of much of the area, has increased by 40 per cent. There have also been significant gains in industrial production in many countries of the area. Installed power capacity is 66 per cent greater than it was in 1950. There has been progress toward diversification of the economies and of the exports of the member countries. In all countries of South and Southeast Asia social services, particularly education and health, have been greatly improved. One of the most interesting developments over the decade has been the acceptance of national planning as an instrument for economic and social progress. All countries of the area now have development plans of one kind or another and all are making increasingly strenuous efforts to overcome their economic problems. This in itself is an indication of a growing awareness of the urgent need for more rapid development.

The achievements of the past ten years in the Colombo Plan area, however, have to be measured against the number of serious continuing problems. One