

120. A further element in the Government's plans for development aid in the Pacific is the projected expansion of assistance to island territories of the South Pacific. Beginning with assistance to the University of the South Pacific, (in the form of scholarships, instructors, and some equipment), the programme has been extended to include the occasional provision of experts to the South Pacific Commission, and "a modest number" of teachers to Western Samoa. The CIDA brief to the Committee stated that further Canadian assistance is under consideration. The Committee has heard suggestions for a much-expanded Canadian effort in this area. Its advocates have pointed out that a relatively small infusion of resources could have quite a decisive impact in this region of less than four million people, and that Canada's bilingual capabilities could be used to good effect. The Committee believes that these are very strong arguments for a more energetic Canadian role. On the other hand, there are also grounds for some caution in approaching this situation. Because of its very "manageability" in terms of size, there is a temptation for Canadians to think along the lines of "adopting" the region in order to accelerate its development. This kind of sentiment may be seen in suggestions that Canada provide subsidized shipping services to and between the islands and provide special markets for a proportion of their exports. Such a scheme, if realized, would be likely to draw these countries into a very artificial Canadian "orbit". This would quickly be resented as paternalism and would probably frustrate the original good intent.

121. The Committee therefore recommends that Canada expand its assistance to the South Pacific countries and territories, acknowledging the need for Canadians to learn more about the region, and cooperating rather than competing with other outside countries working for regional development. The possibility of some form of closer association with the South Pacific Commission merits further examination by the Government.

D. Coordination and Cooperation

122. Working with the South Pacific Commission would provide opportunities for Canada to learn more about the area and at the same time coordinate its aid efforts with those of other interested donors, especially Australia and New Zealand. Some observers have suggested that this co-operation might take the form of a "little Colombo Plan". It must be reiterated that in the Pacific region this kind of co-operation with other donors is especially essential because of Canada's relative inexperience in the area and the limits of its available resources. Participation in regional and sub-regional development programmes is one of the most effective ways of sharing experience and achieving coordination, but there are also an increasing number of other possibilities. It will be generally beneficial to maintain an active dialogue with other donor countries with special Pacific interests. At the 1971 meeting of the Japan-Canada Ministerial Committee, it was agreed that the two countries should co-operate in their respective aid programmes. Other possibilities include the aid consortia and consultative groups to coordinate programmes in individual countries. Canada's membership in the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia is a positive move in this direction. On