

## FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY OF THE WORLD

The following excerpts are from a speech by Mr. Maurice Sauvé, Minister of Forestry and acting Minister of Agriculture, on accepting the chairmanship of the thirteenth session of the FAO Conference recently:

When delegates of 42 nations met in Quebec City, on October 16, 1965, in the conference that was to found the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, they elected as their chairman a Canadian - Lester B. Pearson, today Prime Minister of Canada. Today, therefore, as the Organization founded in Quebec City celebrates its twentieth anniversary, it is a particularly great and moving honour for me, as a Canadian and as a member of the Government which Mr. Pearson now heads, to have been chosen to serve as chairman of the thirteenth session of the FAO Conference....

Where do we stand today? No man, not even the most impatient, can deny that, in the last 20 years, FAO has accomplished much of which we can all be proud. Yet no man, not even the most complacent, can deny that we have not done nearly enough. For, in 1965, A.D., famine, most dread and cruel of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, still rides and ravages unhindered throughout most of the inhabited world. Not only does mankind's age-old enemy remain unconquered, but he is slowly and inexorably gaining ground. In spite of all that we have done so far, we must acknowledge that we are losing, not winning, the war on hunger. Let me repeat the bleak, stark facts:

More than half of the world's population - over one and a half billion human beings - is undernourished or mal-nourished today.

It is estimated that world population, about three billion in 1960, will be doubled in 35 years from now.

To feed these people adequately, Asia and the Far East will need four times their present food supply; Latin America will need scarcely less; the Near East will need three times its present food supply; Africa will need from two to three times its present food supply. By the year 2,000, these areas will contain three-quarters of the world's population.

In spite of all our efforts so far, the gap in food supplies and productivity between developed and developing nations is widening, not narrowing, although four-fifths of the population of most developing countries is engaged in agriculture.

### CHALLENGE NOT INSURMOUNTABLE

The litany is sobering indeed. To me it makes one thing absolutely clear - there can now be no possible question that the increasing disparity in the satisfaction of basic human needs between the rich nations and the poor nations of the world, is the major problem of our time. Not only is it the number one social and economic problem facing mankind, it is also by far the number one threat to world peace. At the very heart of this problem is food, the most elementary of all man's needs. As a hungry man is a desperate

man, so is a hungry nation a desperate nation. Therefore, even the most naked self-interest demands that all governments do their utmost to give to each man his daily bread, everywhere in the world. The obligation lies on rich nations and poor alike. If we fail, mass starvation must eventually result, with incalculable human misery, desperation and inevitable violence, perhaps on a world scale. This is the awesome challenge that faces FAO; this is the stirring challenge that faces this conference for the next three weeks. On our response to this challenge may well hang the future of civilization and of mankind itself. One shining fact must always condition our reaction to the challenge of freeing mankind from hunger. That fact is, that however enormous the task may seem, we know that it is not impossible. We know that victory is within our grasp....

### PROBLEM ESSENTIALLY SOCIAL

Scientifically, technologically, we know we have the answers. We have also identified the sole remaining barrier that prevents us from achieving our goal. This barrier is the problem of effectively communicating to developing nations the technology and the economic conditions that will permit them to increase agricultural productivity. What we now face is basically an educational task, and like all educational tasks it depends to a large degree on incentive and motivation. We can and we must solve this problem. It is essentially not a technical problem, but a social one.

Our knowledge of the social and behavioural sciences is sufficient to solve this problem right now. What we have not done, and what we must now do, is to marshal our existing knowledge and experience in this field, and bring it to bear on this last remaining barrier in a massive onslaught of experimental programmes and trial approaches. The key to winning the war on hunger once and for all, is to concentrate our knowledge, energies and resources in a comprehensive co-ordinated, unified attack. This is far from easy. We must co-ordinate the efforts of the public sector and the private sector. The freedom from hunger campaign has made much progress towards this goal. We must co-ordinate and synthesize the findings and research of all relevant sciences and disciplines. We must always remember that we are not trying to solve the problem of hunger alone - this is both impossible and undesirable, but to satisfy the whole spectrum of human needs, of which the need for food, if perhaps the most basic, is but one. Therefore, we must concern ourselves as well with shelter, health, welfare, recreation, and above all, education and training. This means a closer co-ordination of our efforts in FAO with those of other international bodies more practically concerned with other human needs.

### A COMMITMENT FROM ALL

What can we do to achieve this essential global approach? Such teamwork, such co-operation and common action, demand above all a commitment: a commitment from ourselves as delegates, because we are here not only as representatives of governments,