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WEEK'S EVENTS IN REVIEW

COLOMBO PLAN CONFERENCE: The alternative to a world of sanity and peace, in the age of the hydrogen bomb, "is dreadful almost beyond conception," the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. L. S. St. Laurent, warned at the opening of the Colombo Plan Conference in Ottawa on October 4.

He was delivering the inaugural address to a gathering of Ministers and officials of the 14 Colombo countries in the House of Commons Chamber. Outside, flags of 14 member nations adorned the entrance; the carillon of the Peace Tower welcomed delegates with a medley of their national anthems.

It was the first Colombo Plan meeting ever held on this continent.

After welcoming the delegates and touching on the aims of the Plan, the Prime Minister proceeded, in part, as follows:

"We Canadians have a deep respect for the peoples of South and South-East Asia, both those whom we are beginning to know well and those whom we hope to know better. We consider it a privilege to be associated with them on a basis of complete individual equality.

"Because of this, and because of the increasing importance of the Asian countries, we in the West earnestly desire to co-operate with our friends in the East. We want to give them mainly what at this time they most need from us - technical and capital assistance to help them on the road to material betterment. But this is perhaps of less lasting significance than the spirit behind these actions.

"Earlier this year I visited Asia. Several convictions which I have frequently expressed in the past were confirmed by that visit. In the Asian countries I visited I saw artistic and cultural achievements, the products of thousands of years of history and I found that the capacity for quiet reflection is as marked an Asian characteristic as we have always imagined it to be. I was reminded of the magnificent contributions which Asian centres of civilization have made and are still making to the cultural heritage of the world and we are sharers in that heritage.

"We too have our treasure-houses of the spirit, without which our lives would be bare indeed. I venture to hope, and to think, that in future we will experience a greater blending and interplay of cultural influences between East and West than has been possible in the past and I am sure both East and West will be benefited thereby.

"In every part of the East which I visited I was impressed by a sense of the dignity of the human individual which, I believe, is deep-rooted in all Asian countries. A firm grasp of human and spiritual values is a source of strength to the East, just as material want is its scourge and peril. I believe that our Asian friends will preserve and enrich their own highest values, and I am sure that this will prove to be of the greatest importance not only to them but to all who are determined that mankind shall avoid enslavement and advance into a better future.