

# The Colombo Plan Conference

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**T**HE 1954 annual meeting of the Consultative Committee on Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia was held in Ottawa from October 4 to October 9. This event was remarkable in that it brought to Canada for the first time representatives of all the countries with which Canada is co-operating under the Colombo Plan. The Canadian Government and people were given an unusual opportunity to be hosts to a distinguished group of delegates from all the countries of South and South-East Asia, from most of the Commonwealth countries, and also from Japan and the United States.

As the meeting of the Consultative Committee was preceded by a two-week meeting of officials from member countries, the conference lasted three weeks in all. During the peak period more than ninety visiting delegates were in Ottawa, some of them accompanied by their wives. At the conclusion of the conference a large number of the delegates joined tours, arranged by the Canadian Government, which extended their stay in Canada by one to two weeks. Thus many Canadians, both in Ottawa and in several other cities, had opportunities to meet the delegates and to learn more about conditions of life and ways of thinking in their countries. The press and radio interviews given by many of the delegates and the articles and programmes about the Colombo Plan and the Colombo Plan countries which were featured in the press and on radio and television during the conference, brought an even larger number of Canadians into indirect contact with the conference and the people who participated in it.

At the same time, the delegates, most of whom had never before been in Canada, were able to learn more about this country and about the Canadian way of life. While in Ottawa they visited the National Gallery, the National Research Council, the Experimental Farm, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the atomic energy plant at Chalk River. The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources arranged an evening on northern Canada. Some of the delegates saw a hockey game and a football game, and they all had opportunities to listen to Canadian music or music performed by Canadians and to see a play performed by Canadian actors. Many of the delegates went on tour following the conference and thus saw other parts of Canada.

## Countries Represented

The countries represented at the conference were Australia, Burma, Cambodia, Canada, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom (with its dependent territories in South-East Asia), the United States and Viet-Nam.\* The Director of the Colombo Plan Bureau for Technical Co-operation and the senior officer

\* The following were the leaders of the delegations:

Australia: Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey, Minister of External Affairs

Burma: Sao Hkon Hkio, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Cambodia: Mr. Phlek Phoeun, Director of National Planning

Canada: Hon. Walter Harris, Minister of Finance (in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs)

Ceylon: Hon. M. D. H. Jayawardene, Minister of Finance