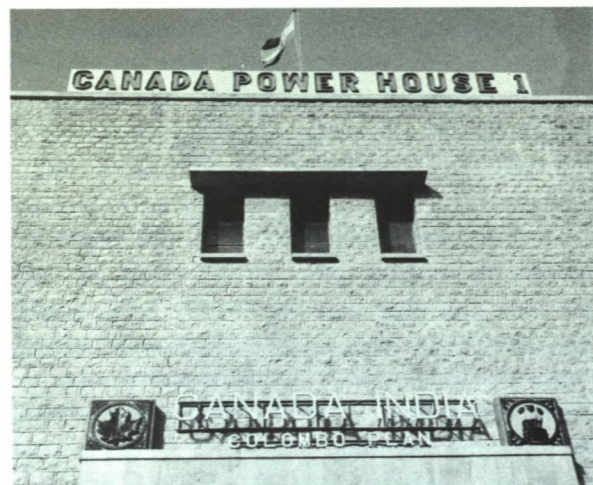


HOW THE PLAN WORKS

Under the Colombo Plan, an attempt is made to combine the advantages of looking at the problems of the whole region with direct economic cooperation between individual countries. The Consultative Committee, which consists of Ministers representing each member government, now meets once a year to review progress in the area as a whole. At these meetings, each country of the area presents a report on its economic development progress, plans and problems. The Committee examines these reports and publishes an annual report which contains a summary of them, along with an assessment of progress made, assistance given and the task ahead. Thus at these annual meetings, countries outside the area learn at first hand of the problems arising within the area, and are better able to see in which particular ways they can best help. At the same time, ministers and officials concerned with economic development in South and South-East Asia can compare notes on methods being employed in neighbouring countries and benefit from the practical experience of others. The Consultative Committee provides an opportunity for remarkably frank and informal discussion.

The Consultative Committee does not, however, administer any funds or attempt to direct outside assistance to particular countries or projects. This is done by direct negotiation between the countries offering assistance and those requesting assistance. Canada, for example, discusses what it can do to provide economic and technical assistance, with each of the Asian participants in the Plan individually. One of the advantages of this method of operation is that the countries participating in individual projects can develop a direct and close working relationship with one another, while at the same time their economic cooperation is considered as part of the overall Plan.



*Power house at
Kundah Dam, India.*