

own exportable surpluses.

It is perhaps no accident that our membership in the Commonwealth has done so much to draw us together. As the late Mr. D.S. Senanayake said in your House of Representatives in February, 1950, "The influence of the Commonwealth as far as Asia is concerned has been to give the Asian peoples freedom and democratic institutions."

Now it is of course, the peoples of the Asian countries themselves and those of the United Kingdom who deserve the main credit for this happy evolution. But other Commonwealth countries, Canada in particular, had played a leading part in creating the sort of Commonwealth into which the new Asian members could find a fitting and helpful place. We Canadians are proud of our membership in this new Commonwealth in which people of every race and colour and creed can work together on a basis of freedom, equality and complete national independence. We also hope that it soon may be possible for Ceylon to join the United Nations, for we feel that Ceylon can make a very worthwhile contribution to its important work.

We are glad that we are able to co-operate with Ceylon through the Colombo Plan. The splendid efforts you are making to improve the economic conditions of your people have won our admiration and respect. I sincerely hope that your technical aid and capital assistance in such fields as your fishing industry and your rural electrification programme will prove of real value to the people of Ceylon.

This economic co-operation suggests that, in practical matters, there are similarities between our two countries.

Canada, like Ceylon, is a nation composed of people of different races, languages and religions and we, too, have a majority and minority groups. Through the exercise of patience and, I think, some good sense, we have built a nation in which all groups work pretty harmoniously together, each making its own contribution to the welfare of the whole. Like you also, our economic prosperity depends to a substantial degree on active world trade.

I have been particularly impressed with the atmosphere of kindness and gentleness I have found in Ceylon. This, I have no doubt, derives from the noble spiritual heritage which you so proudly cherish. A people who, over the centuries, have acquired habits of mind such as yours are bound to be a people who live together harmoniously, dealing justly and honourably with one another.

This tour is for me a voyage of discovery. Unlike the wanderers of ancient days who found their way in ships into havens such as your storied port of Colombo, I am travelling through the air and setting down at large airports like Ratmalana. I am, nevertheless, a discoverer, for this is the first time it has been my privilege to visit Asia. Indeed, it is the first time that any Prime Minister of Canada has travelled so far from home and I am happy to feel that our people unanimously approved of my doing so at this time.