

As to the economic needs of the emerging nations of Africa, there was a unanimous recognition that a substantial expansion of economic assistance was necessary in order to assist these countries to achieve self-sustaining growth. The greatest remaining under-developed region of the world is Africa, where no special international economic assistance programme has been established and where the flow of investment and aid funds, in comparison with that to other under-developed countries, is disproportionately small. The Prime Minister of Ghana is seriously concerned about this situation. It was agreed that unless measures are quickly taken in this crucial formative period in the history of these new African nations there may very well develop in those nations doubts as to the goodwill of the developed countries of the West, and they may be tempted to look for sympathy and assistance in other directions.

Mention was made of what the Colombo Plan had done. There is no such type of international assistance as yet available in Africa. Consideration is therefore being given to the possibility of co-operative action among members of the Commonwealth in assisting the economic development of countries in Africa which have recently attained or are approaching independence. This matter will be studied by the various Commonwealth governments, and will be examined at the next meeting of the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council in London.

On behalf of the Government, Canada indicated willingness, subject to Parliament, to participate in such a programme. I cannot at present, however, indicate the scope of the aid programme which may flow from the decisions of the Conference, or offer any forecast of what will be required from Canada.

Then, in connection with the need for technical assistance for the newly independent countries of both Asia and Africa, the Prime Minister of Malaya drew attention to the fact that his Government required the services of persons with specialized skills and experience in the administrative and technical fields. There was general support that everything should be done to foster and encourage exchanges of specialized personnel, and that the question should be taken into consideration by the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council.

A further subject--and this was one that will become of increasing importance ... was the constitutional development of the Commonwealth. Up to the present time it has been possible to preserve the intimate character of the Prime Minister's meetings. The essence of these meetings is that they are conducted, as I said, in an informal way. No resolutions are moved; no votes are taken. Progress is made by agreement after discussion. However, as the membership of the Commonwealth grows new problems as to how these meetings will be conducted will arise.