

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 57/2 TOUR OF SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Report made in the House of Commons, January 14, 1957,
by the Hon. Paul Martin, Canadian Delegate to the
Colombo Plan meetings at Wellington, New Zealand, on
his visit to 13 countries in South and South-East Asia.

... I was asked by the Prime Minister and my colleagues
in the Government to represent Canada at the consultative meetings
on the Ministerial level of the Colombo Plan which were held,
beginning on December 4, in Wellington, New Zealand and at the
same time to take advantage of that long journey to visit some
13 countries in South and South-East Asia with which Canada has
not had as great contact in the past as have many other nations
whose history and period of existence are longer than our own.

So on November 11 I journeyed first to the Philippines
and from there to Indochina to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. I am
the first Canadian Minister of the Crown to have had the privilege
of going to Indochina at any time, certainly since the setting up
of the three International Supervisory Commissions which operate
in those three countries in that historic part of Asia. From
there I went to Indonesia and then to Thailand; from there to
Australia and to New Zealand for the Colombo Plan meeting. Then
back to Sydney, that great city in Australia, and on to Canberra
for consultation and talks with the Prime Minister and members
of the Government of Australia.

Afterward I journeyed to Singapore, to Malaya, to Ceylon,
to India and Pakistan, and then back home.

In all of these places I had the opportunity of discussing
matters with the head of every state where the head of the state
is actually the chief of government. In those countries where the
prime minister is the head of the government or, as in the case of
Singapore and Malaya where the chief minister is the head of the
government, I had the opportunity of conferring and talking with
these latter persons on matters of mutual and world interest.
Likewise in every country I had the opportunity of valuable talks
with all the foreign ministers but one and with my opposite numbers
in the field of health and welfare. I should like now to thank
all of those governments for the opportunities which they provided
me as a member of the Government of Canada to discuss with them
problems of common interest and of international concern.

Understanding Needed

It is I know difficult to draw conclusions from what one
has seen and heard. It is possible sometimes to formulate too
readily impressions which one has gathered, particularly in a continent
like Asia with its millions of people, more people than are to be
found anywhere else in the world, more in the two countries of China
and India than in all Europe and all the Americas together. The
overriding impression I gained is that in the formulation of policy
which has to do with the peace of the world, with the relations of
one state with another, we ought in the assessment we make of other
peoples' conduct and actions, of other governments' policies, to
seek to understand the circumstances and the context in which those
policies are formulated and projected. That certainly is true of
Asia.