

THE COLOMBO EXHIBITION*

"Canadians welcome the opportunity offered by the Colombo Plan to share their technical skills with the older civilizations of South and South-East Asia. This partnership can enrich the lives of us all."

In these words, which have been inscribed in the principal languages of the area — Urdu, Hindustani, Tamil, Singhalese and English — at the entrance to the Canadian Pavilion of the Colombo Exhibition, are to be found the greetings of the Prime Minister of Canada to the peoples of South and South-East Asia. This Pavilion is intended to provide a picture of Canada and of its natural resources for visitors to the Exhibition, which is being held next February in Colombo, Ceylon, to commemorate the first anniversary of the Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia.

As evidence of its sympathy with the aspirations of the newly independent states of the area, Canada has welcomed the inauguration of the Colombo Plan, which provides for economic aid and technical assistance to the countries of South and South-East Asia. The Colombo Plan comprises two programmes, one a capital development programme to provide capital and necessary equipment for certain specific projects in the countries of the area, and the other, a technical assistance programme to aid the governments of these countries to use to the full their as yet undeveloped natural resources, by finding means to increase food production, improve health standards, develop communications and transportation systems, and train efficient public administrators. As the Colombo Plan is essentially a co-operative venture, it is hoped that the Exhibition in Ceylon will enable those countries participating in the Plan to indicate the measure of assistance already rendered and the extent to which they hope to contribute, individually and collectively, towards the economic development of South and South-East Asia.

The Exhibition is scheduled to last for a month. More than 1,500,000 people from Ceylon and the countries of the area are expected to visit the Exhibition grounds, which are located in Victoria Park, Colombo. Her Royal Highness The Princess Elizabeth will open the Exhibition officially during her visit to Ceylon.

In addition to the national pavilions of the countries participating in the Colombo Plan — Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Ceylon, India, Laos, Malaya, New Zealand, Pakistan and the United Kingdom — and the countries which have shown an interest in the Plan — Burma, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam — the Exhibition will include a trade fair section, in which commercial firms of these nations have been invited to display their products. As host, the Government of Ceylon will have a special section setting forth its economic and social welfare activities. A cultural section for the fine arts, and an amusement section will also be located in the forty acres of park lands set aside for the Exhibition.

Canadian Exhibit

When the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission was assigned the task of designing and producing the Canadian Pavilion, many climatic difficulties, peculiar to tropical countries, had first to be considered. In order that the peoples of South-East Asia might have some idea of the materials produced in Canada, it was decided to prefabricate, in Ottawa, the building to house the Canadian exhibit. The contemporary design of the structure creates a distinctly Canadian atmosphere and materials of aluminum, fir and cedar panelling are used in their natural finish. To allow for sufficient ventilation under tropical conditions, a large part of the building has been left open.

* See also "Colombo Plan—Recent Developments", September 1951, p. 313.