



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 65/25

CANADIAN YOUTH SERVES THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

An Address by the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, to the Canadian University Service Overseas in Ottawa, October 1, 1965.

I am very pleased, Mr. Chairman, to be present at this annual meeting of Canadian University Service Overseas.

Your organization - started by voluntary initiative and maintained by voluntary effort - has been aptly described as a spontaneous and vital counter-thrust of Canadian society to specific international challenges.

The voluntary service on which CUSO is based is a Canadian tradition which extends back to the earliest days of settlement in Canada - settlement by people from two great European civilizations, French and English....

To say that CUSO has been a trail-blazer in Canada's voluntary efforts to help the developing countries of our world is accurate but inadequate. Such a statement can hardly bring alive the thousands of hours of hard work undertaken in your organization by all sorts of people.

I have reviewed your work, as outlined in the latest annual report of your Executive Secretary, and I am most impressed with your programmes and your achievements. I congratulate all of you for this great effort in the field of international co-operation.

It was Arnold Toynbee who said: "Our age will be remembered because it is the first generation since the dawn of history to believe it practical to make the benefits of civilization available to the whole human race." This statement by such an eminent historian underlines the greatest challenge confronting today's industrially-advanced societies: the challenge to assist people everywhere to enjoy the sort of life which can only exist through decent educational opportunities, good health standards, and growing economies.

Yet the realization that we now have the capacity to make the benefits of civilization available to the whole human race seems to be more of an emotional attitude than a conscious, rational commitment to the cause of international development. Despite the very considerable efforts of the Western democracies during the past 15 years, the poor countries of the world are now worse off economically, compared with the rich nations, than they were in 1945. The gap has widened between the two worlds.