

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 54/13 PRIME MINISTER'S RADIO BROADCAST FROM COLOMBO

An address by the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent, to
the people of Ceylon, delivered by radio from Colombo,
March 3, 1954.

I am indeed grateful for this opportunity of speaking to the people of Ceylon. I bring you warm and friendly greetings from the people of Canada. My daughter, my son, the other members of our party and I have all been deeply touched by the friendliness which has surrounded us since our arrival in Ceylon Sunday afternoon. We are also most grateful to His Excellency, the Governor-General, to your distinguished Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala, to your Government and to my good friend, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, for the very cordial hospitality they have extended to us. Your Island and your people are indeed as hospitable and attractive as I have always imagined them to be.

We Canadians have always thought of Ceylon as a lovely, tropical land of coconut palms and spice groves and tea gardens. We know, too, something of your history, reaching back into mythological times - the legend of your Singha; the ancient irrigation works built by your early kings, some of which are operating even today; and your many noble capitals which still reveal the artistic genius of your people. We have been glad to learn more of all this during our stay in Kandy, just as we were glad to see something of present day activities like the rapid development of the new university campus and halls at Peradeniya.

During the past few years, Canadians have also begun to learn something of your day-to-day life and your practical problems. We had already watched with great interest your constitutional development which culminated in 1948 in your becoming like ourselves a democratic self-governing member of the Commonwealth.

In the succeeding years Ceylonese and Canadians have often met and worked together. I have had the privilege of meeting both the late Mr. D.S. Senanayake, that great Ceylonese patriot and staunch friend of freedom, and his son, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, at conferences of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London. And as you may remember, our Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Pearson, and Mr. Mayhew, now our Ambassador to Japan, attended the conference of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers which gave birth to the Colombo Plan in 1950.

It is fitting that your capital should have given its name to this great endeavour. Since that time many Canadians have visited Ceylon, some of them staying to work under the Colombo Plan alongside those working under other auspices. Last year we asked you to receive our first High Commissioner, Mr. J.J. Hurley. A few months later Mr. Sinclair, our Minister of Fisheries, visited Ceylon and brought back to us an enthusiastic report about your developments. At the same time our people at home have been reading and learning more about your country, your requirements from other lands and your