



—Standard

COLOMBO PLAN CONFERENCE AT SINGAPORE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs and leader of the Canadian Delegation, Mr. L. B. Pearson, addressing a meeting of the Colombo Plan Conference.

a rapidly increasing population. In the Annual Report, the Committee summarized this problem in the following way:

When the progress achieved so far, not only in food production but in economic development generally, is compared with the fundamental problem of raising the living standards of a rapidly increasing population, it is clear that much remains to be done. Current levels of per capita food consumption are substantially higher than in postwar years but are lower than before the war and below accepted standards of nutrition.

At the same time the population of the area as a whole is estimated to be increasing by about 10 million persons a year. This rapid growth, deriving from an increasing birth rate and from the less often recognized phenomenon of a falling death rate, is a fact of singular importance for the future development of the area and the improvement of its living standards. . . In practically every country of the region under-employment, especially in rural areas, is common and in some countries unemployment has become a serious issue . . . Development plans have, therefore, both a current and long term problem to meet, if opportunities for employment in activities beneficial to the economy generally, are to be created at a rate sufficient not only to keep up with the annual increase in the labour force, but to overtake it.

The review also brought out the difficulties experienced in a number of countries in expanding their domestic budgetary resources. Since there is usually a time-lag between the investment outlay on large scale projects and