

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, at the Plenary Session of the Third Commonwealth Education Conference, Ottawa, August 27, 1964.

* Indicates paragraphs delivered in French.

I wish to place before this Third Commonwealth Education Conference the position of the Government of Canada on some of the vital issues you are discussing.

The Commonwealth association provides an incomparable basis for co-operation in many differing fields of endeavour. Twenty years ago, it was commonly thought that the strength of the Commonwealth lay in the "like-mindedness" of its members - then few in number, and all countries whose populations were largely of European origin. Today the strength of the Commonwealth lies to a very great extent in its diversity.

We can see clearly the turning-points in the recent history of the Commonwealth. One was symbolized by the decision of India to maintain its membership in the Commonwealth when that great country became a republic and by the agreement of the other members to welcome India under these circumstances. A second turning-point resulted from the stand taken on apartheid. I think that another important stage was reached this year when the Prime Ministers subscribed to a declaration of racial equality put forward by the Prime Minister of Canada. They agreed that the Commonwealth has a particular role to play in the search for solutions to the inter-racial problems which are threatening the orderly development of many areas in the world.

From another standpoint, the inauguration of the Colombo Plan in 1950 was a turning-point because of the concentration of the members of the Commonwealth, in the years which followed, on problems of economic development. Although the Colombo Plan has been enlarged to include other countries of South and Southeast Asia (and we have taken special interest in the countries of Indochina), Canada's main effort has been centered on the Commonwealth countries.

The Commonwealth has thus provided for us in Canada special connections with countries in far continents and has helped us to see beyond our own borders, our own continent and our essentially European traditions. It has increased our insight into the values of other civilizations and societies and our understanding of the aspirations of the peoples of Asia and Africa. I believe that in this process others have come to know us better. In an era when nationalism sometimes breaks the bounds of reason, an association which stimulates international and intercontinental understanding is invaluable. The Commonwealth has been, remains, and will be a basic element in Canadian foreign policy. The Ottawa Conference provides dramatic evidence, if such is needed, of its essential meaning. The real values of the Commonwealth lie not always in what we say but more often in what we do. We are discussing at this Conference the challenges which the newer member countries are endeavouring to meet in the field of educational development. I believe we are coming to understand these problems more fully.

* Thus the Commonwealth has helped us to understand ourselves and to find solutions to our own problems. As you are already aware, Canada is a land of contrasts, and its most important feature is, in my opinion, its bicultural character. You have probably been more familiar with the educational system of English-speaking Canadians, and I am sure that many of you were unaware of the excellent system that is being organized for French-speaking Canadians. As the Honourable Gérin-Lajoie told you himself last Saturday in Quebec City:

* "We know that education, by providing Quebec with the skills it will require, will ensure the continuity of its growth. Education will also enable Quebec to assert itself more effectively, to increase its contribution to the welfare of our country, and to occupy its rightful place in the Canadian federation and in the world."

* It is not without some pride, therefore, that I emphasize the fact that Canada can offer to its students, at the elementary, secondary and university levels, valuable instruction in French and in English.

* Up to the present, our efforts in the field of educational assistance abroad have been directed mainly toward Commonwealth countries where we have sent teachers of mathematics, science, industrial arts, and of French or English as a second language. However, in April 1961, the Canadian Government decided to organize for the French-speaking countries of Africa, a bilateral plan of co-operation similar in principle to that which is applied in Commonwealth countries. With an annual grant of \$300,000, a programme of assistance was set up the main objective of which was the assignment of Canadian teachers at the secondary-school level. The recruiting of our teachers went on successfully thanks to the joint efforts of the External Aid Office and the Department of Education of the Province of Quebec. Here I should like to mention the gesture of

Government of Rwanda in entrusting the Very Reverent Father Levesque with the founding of a national university and appointing him the first rector of that university. Such a gesture constitutes an uncommon evidence of appreciation and trust concerning the ability of Father Levesque and of French-Canadian teachers generally.

Up to the present, it seems to me that the countries participating in the Commonwealth Scholarship Programme have not taken full advantage of the facilities of Canadian French-language institutions, particularly with respect to the teaching of French as a second language and the teaching of other subjects in French. We hope that the possibilities for such French-language training in Canada will be more fully used in the future.

In my own experience I have found, in almost every discussion with leaders of the developing countries, that the importance of assisting their educational facilities has been emphasized again and again. Only by raising the level of understanding amongst the nations of the world can there be any enduring hope of establishing the kind of relations between governments which will make a durable peace possible. We have also come to realize, and chiefly since the end of the Second World War, that the economic and social advancement of the less-developed areas of the world depends on broadening and improving their educational facilities.

As Canadian policy on this and on other aid questions has developed, we have, of course, constantly kept in mind the basic principle governing our aid programmes. This is that priorities for the assistance we are able to provide must be established by the receiving countries themselves and that for all projects, and during all the stages of their implementation, there must be the closest and fullest participation by both the donor and the receiving authorities.

During the past three years the Canadian Government has steadily and substantially increased the educational aspects of its external-aid programmes. In the fiscal year 1963-64 expenditure on educational projects has increased almost four times over the expenditures for 1960-61 and reached a level representing just under 20 per cent of the total expenditure under Canada's bilateral-aid programme. The importance of this figure is clearer when it is realized that most of these expenditures are for the provision of personnel, in contrast to the much greater sums involved in large capital projects. It is expected that this trend will continue and that increasing amounts of aid funds will be used to meet requests for educational assistance. In addition, we have accepted commitments in the current fiscal year for capital projects in the education field estimated to cost over \$4 million.

Last November I announced, in the Canadian House of Commons, an expanded programme for assistance to the developing countries (primarily to those in the Commonwealth). This programme is expected to reach a total of approximately \$200 million in the fiscal year 1964-65. Under the Colombo Plan, the Commonwealth Caribbean Programme,

the Special Commonwealth Africa Aid Programme and the programme for which this Conference is responsible, detailed negotiations with all the governments and authorities concerned are taking place to determine the best possible allocation of the available funds.

I have spoken so far in terms of expenditures. I should also like to describe some of our more important experiences with the actual operation of our programmes. The number of Canadian teachers and teacher trainers who have served in Commonwealth countries has increased fivefold in the last four years, and in 1964 will reach a total of 214. Over and above this, it is anticipated that there will be 30 Canadian university professors serving in Commonwealth countries next year. In the same four-year period, the number of training programmes arranged in Canada has moved steadily upward, from 711 in 1960-61 to over double this figure in the current year. We have assisted with the building and equipping of schools and teacher-training centres, and we have helped with the establishment and development of university faculties.

Some of the Canadian university professors have been assigned on the basis of individual contracts and others have been sent out as members of a team under a general contractual arrangement with a particular university. This brings important advantages both to the Canadian universities and to the developing countries. On the one hand, it provides a flexible method of administration; on the other, it lays the basis of important continuing links between Canadian universities and universities in the developing countries.

This kind of arrangement is, in fact, an illustration of the composite type of project we have emphasized in educational aid. These projects involve an attack on several fronts, by providing buildings, equipment, and Canadian teaching staff abroad and related training facilities in Canada. In appropriate circumstances such projects have the maximum favourable impact on local education facilities and are, as a result, particularly welcomed by the developing countries.

I know that the problems of training have occupied a good deal of attention during the deliberations of this Conference so far, and I should like to refer to the Canadian experience in this particular field. Our basic objective is, wherever possible, to assist training institutions in the students' home countries. We have done this either by strengthening existing facilities or help to establish new ones. We shall, of course, continue to provide training in Canada for students from the developing countries until local facilities are able to meet local needs. In our programmes we have placed particular emphasis on group training. Although individual programmes will doubtless continue to be required, our experience has been that group programmes in many cases meet the students' needs more effectively. We have, as a result, undertaken in various institutions across Canada group training programmes in various fields, including public administration, co-operatives development and labour-leader training.

We have also found that skilled sub-professional areas of training represent a particularly important contribution to manpower needs in the developing countries. We therefore offered last year, for the first time, trade and sub-professional programmes of one or two years duration. An additional year of technical teacher training was offered as part of these arrangements.

A review of Canadian experience with the operation of our educational assistance programmes would not be complete without reference to the important fact that, under our Constitution, education is an exclusive provincial responsibility. Consequently, Canada could not have enlarged its educational programmes to the extent so far possible or maintained our standards of performance had it not been for the generous co-operation of provincial educational authorities and of the many individuals and public and private organizations in the field of education across Canada. In stating the Canadian Government's gratitude to provincial governments, to individuals and to groups, I should like to express the hope that they will be able to offer the same measure of assistance in the future.

The Canadian Government, which put forward the concept of a Commonwealth Education Programme at Montreal in 1958, has thus attempted to proceed along useful and, I hope, practical lines in response to demonstrated needs. The framework within which Canadian aid is provided comes, of course, under constant review so that advantage can be taken of new developments and of opportunities to make the programme even more responsive to the needs of the developing countries. The following are some of the steps we have taken recently:

First, Canada has agreed to the use of counterpart funds, which arise from the sale of Canadian products and commodities supplied under Canada's assistance programmes, for educational purposes. We would readily consider the increased use of such funds for educational projects. This is one of a series of measures designed to add still further to the utility of the increased aid funds we are making available.

Second, I am also pleased to be able to announce that the Canadian Government will, for the first time, be assisting the African Students Foundation, a national organization which has brought more than 125 African students to Canada during the last four years.

This year, 12 students who have studied in Canada under the auspices of the African Students Foundation will graduate from Canadian universities. The organization anticipates that, in 1965, 22 will graduate; in 1966, 37; and in 1967, 28. The organization has also done a great deal in providing assistance for other African students who have come to Canada under their own auspices.

The Government's assistance to the African Students Foundation will take the form of provision of transportation for this year's students who are coming from Africa to Canada in September of this year. This measure represents a further step in our policy of

encouraging an active partnership between the Government and the voluntary organizations in Canada working in the field of international development.

Finally, I should like at this time to announce that the Canadian Government will institute a programme of senior fellowships and visiting educationalists' awards to be financed out of the increased appropriation already approved for the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan for the fiscal year 1964-65. This will be over and above our commitment at the Oxford Conference to make available one-quarter of the total number of scholarships under the Commonwealth Scholarship Plan. We have made remarkably good progress in fulfilling this objective and the target of 250 is now in sight. It therefore seems particularly appropriate to embark on a senior fellowship plan.

This will undoubtedly be recorded as an important and rewarding meeting. We are proud, as Canadians, to welcome such a distinguished group of educators, to share our experience with you, and to profit from the knowledge of education in all its aspects which you bring to us. This gathering represents the Commonwealth at its best and will surely serve to strengthen the value and the meaning of Commonwealth ideals. Our work constitutes a constructive, practical and forward step in the direction of shared educational resources within the Commonwealth. Education, the symbol of hope for mankind, is the only firm basis for progress toward that ordered and peaceful world we all hope to see established for this and future generations.

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