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Speech by the Secretary of State for
External Affairs, the Hon. Paul Martin,
at the Annual Conference of the Co-operators
Insurance Association, Windsor, 1:00 p.m.,
Saturday, March 18.

"CANADIAN CO-OPERATIVES IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT"

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today, at this Annual Conference of the Co-operators Insurance Association.

It is hardly necessary for me to tell you of the important part which the co-operative movement plays in our economy and our democratic society. Co-operation is a good deal more than a method of doing business. It is a way of life which recognizes that the welfare of each is the welfare of all.

Through the co-operative way, by joining hands with others -- regardless of their race or creed or class -- it is possible for all to help themselves, materially and morally, to a better and finer standard of life.

At this point in history, when so many of the world's peoples are actively aspiring to a better life, the co-operative movement is of particular significance. I am thinking especially of the peoples in the developing countries, who are suffering from the effects of poverty and backwardness. Many of the developing countries have recognized the relevance of co-operatives in their attempts to evolve new social and economic structures, appropriate to the modern world, and to the greatly increased aspirations of their peoples.

The purposes and goals which inspire the co-operative movement in Canada lead naturally to a willingness and a desire on the part of Canadian co-operators to share their experience and knowledge with the people of the developing countries. Assistance in the development of co-operatives has thus become an important aspect of the Canadian Government's external aid programme.

In the early nineteen-sixties, the External Aid Office set up special group programmes for training in co-operatives, to accommodate the increased members who were coming to Canada to seek

this type of training. Last year, about 100 students received training through these group programmes in co-operatives. This year, it is planned to provide training for 130, and as many as 50 more may be placed in new group courses.

The group programmes are designed to prepare candidates with the knowledge and managerial skills to organize, administer and promote cooperative endeavours. These programmes have evolved to where they now offer specialization in rural development, agricultural marketing, credit union management -- and, for the first time this year -- fisheries cooperatives. Students will shortly arrive for this course from 18 countries.

The training given in these fields is not management training in a narrow sense. Rather, we are consciously preparing students for a leadership role in their homelands. To this end instruction in community development subjects, adult-education, and the social sciences is included as an integral part of the co-operative programmes. One programme, lasting an academic year as compared with the usual 4 to 6 months, has as its special emphasis the preparation of those who will have a broad community leadership role. This is the Social Leadership course offered at the Coady International Institute of Saint Francis Xavier University.

The shorter courses are conducted at several institutions, all of which have built up reputations for excellence in their fields. These are Western Cooperative College in Saskatoon, the Coady International Institute again, -- world renowned for its efforts in promoting self-help abroad since the 1920's -- and in Lévis, Quebec, l'Institut Coopératif Desjardins. These are the

principal centers for External Aid-sponsored training programmes. Other institutes are involved for specialized phases, including the credit-union movement of CUNA International, and the universities in Manitoba and Newfoundland. The Fisheries College of Newfoundland has recently become associated with our fisheries co-operative programme.

A statement of training facilities would not be complete without mention of the excellent participation of the many co-operative societies and associations in Canada, and the Cooperative Union of Canada, whose advice and counsel is freely given. Our students are attached for short periods to various co-operative organizations in all parts of this country. This allows them to gain first-hand familiarity and experience with operational matters. Students continuously report on the warm personal attention and valuable job experience given them at these places.

Students from some 60 of the newly independent or developing countries take advantage of co-operative training offered by Canada. When they return to their homelands, they feel both equipped and imbued to undertake challenging assignments for their people. They are employed both by private organizations and government development agencies, but their assignments are similar: organizing farmers, initiating housing projects, mobilizing penny savings, craft industries, and a variety of self-help schemes. In one Asian country, leaders trained here in Canada were instrumental in a rural redevelopment scheme in a region which had been subjected to guerrilla activities.

Many of the development efforts in which our trainees are involved have a regional or even national importance, usually linked with attempts at integrating scattered communities into a larger national economy and the raising of their living standards.

Some of our former students are involved in quite local but still important work. A woman credit union trainee from the West Indies found herself drawn into the marketing problems of the fishing villages of her island. She recognized that her training was sufficiently broad that it could be put to good use in that situation, and undertook to involve herself with the villagers' situation as well as carrying on her normal duties. In other areas our trainees mention such things as a co-operatively purchased tractor being a first step in elevating their capital-poor local economy.

In a very real sense, training in the field of co-operatives represents "investment in people". It involves not only the provision of technical advice and theoretical instruction, but also the transfer of experience. In many cases, it results in the establishment of valuable personal relationships between peoples of differing backgrounds, between trainer and trainee. And I am confident that it will lead, in time, to the establishment of more dynamic economies, and more stable and adaptable societies, in the countries from which the trainees come, and to which they return.

After completing a group course in co-operatives, one student from a developing country summed up his feelings, and those of his colleagues, in this way: "It is my sincere desire that we be given (an) opportunity to say thank you, before we depart to our

different homes, for creating such a fund that enabled us to come ... to this free and glorious country of free and generous people ... to see and to (learn)".