

PRESS RELEASE

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As a further step in the help it is extending to the Asian countries participating in the Colombo Plan for their economic and social development, Canada is sending a small team of specialists in co-operative and agricultural training to India, Pakistan and Ceylon. The team will make enquiries about the technical assistance which Canada can most usefully give in those fields and will report its findings to the Government. The team is composed of:

Mr. H.L. Trueman and Mr. J.E. O'Meara
of the Department of Agriculture;

Rev. M.J. McKinnon, Director of Extension,
St. Francis Xavier University,
Antigonish, N.S.

Mr. R.H. Tremblay, Chief Inspector of the
Federation des Caisse Populaire, Desjardins,
Que.

The team will visit co-operative training institutions, rural development projects and agricultural colleges in the Asian countries. Mr. Trueman will explore how Canada can help in training agricultural technicians, Mr. O'Meara will enquire how Canada can help in the development of co-operative marketing, Fater McKinnon will make a study of co-operative education and Mr. Tremblay will see to what extent Canadian experience in rural savings and credit is applicable to conditions in those countries.

This team is being sent out because of the emphasis placed on co-operatives and agricultural training in the first Indian Five Year Plan, in the report on the economic development of Ceylon prepared by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and in the proposals for rural development made by the Government of Pakistan.

During the course of its mission the Canadian team will work closely with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Office, which are already giving technical assistance in these fields to South and South-East Asia. The team will leave Ottawa on January 17. They will confer with officials of the International Labour Office in Geneva and of the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome. They will then go on to India, Pakistan and Ceylon where they will spend approximately three months.

(A background paper on the mission
is available)

January 17, 1953

COLOMBO PLAN - AGRICULTURAL AND CO-OPERATIVE
MISSION FROM CANADA

Background paper

Canada participates in two technical assistance programmes designed to increase production and raise the standard of living in the under-developed countries. The first of these is the United Nations Expanded Technical Assistance Programme, the Canadian contribution to which is absorbed into the Special Fund administered by the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies. Because the needs of the people of South and South East Asia for technical assistance are particularly urgent, Canada helped to establish and is now participating in the Colombo Programme for Technical Co-operation, which is actually a part of our bigger effort in helping in the capital development of the area under the Colombo Plan. Although Canada's technical and capital assistance has so far been given almost exclusively to India, Pakistan and Ceylon, neither the Colombo Plan nor the programme for Technical Co-operation is restricted to Commonwealth countries.

Technical assistance under the Colombo Programme involves the training of persons from Asian countries in countries where suitable instruction is available, the provision of experts and instructors to act in advisory or administrative capacities or for the training of personnel in the Asian countries, and the provision of equipment required for training or use by technical experts sent to South and South East Asia.

It is also possible under the Programme to provide for "the establishment, equipment, extension or endowment of training or other institutions of the countries of the region."

Canadian experience in the field of co-operation and agricultural extension services has attracted international attention. The United Nations, the Food and Agriculture Organization and other bodies have sent trainees to Canada to study co-operation and observe co-operative techniques in Canadian communities.

The opinion that Canada might give useful assistance to India, Pakistan and Ceylon in these fields has been reinforced by the importance given to these matters in the First Five Year Plan of the Government of India, in the Report on the Economic Development of Ceylon by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and in the recommendations of the Asian Regional Conferences of the International Labour Office in India (1947), Ceylon (1950) and the Asian Technical Conference in Pakistan (1951), which have led to the setting up of an ILO Asian Co-operative Field Mission in Lahore, Pakistan.

India

The development of the co-operative movement is regarded by the Indian Government as one of the basic factors that can influence the accomplishment of the objectives of India's Five Year Plan for economic development. The summary of the Plan states that:

"In almost every field of development, especially in the rural economy, the Plan emphasizes the role of co-operative organizations. The principle of co-operation is indeed basic to rapid social and economic development under democratic conditions. The co-operative movement in India has a membership of 12 million organized in 173,000 co-operative societies with a working capital of Rs 233 crores. There has been rapid expansion of co-operation during the past five years and an increasing variety of activities are now being handled by the co-operative movement. It is important that in implementing the Plan administrative authorities should foster co-operative methods of organization and not look upon co-operative development as being the responsibility only of the Co-operative Department. With the growing interest of the Reserve Bank and the assistance which the Bank is already giving to the movement, the prospects of co-operative development during the next few years are favourable. The Central Government has provided a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs during the period of the Plan for arranging training in co-operation and for undertaking experiments in different forms of co-operative organizations."

With special reference to the development of the fishing industry the summary states:

"Elimination of middlemen in the industry and provision of fishing requirements through co-operatives has been recommended. Funds have been earmarked to facilitate distribution of supplies. As large scale fishing operations develop large catches will be landed at Bombay, Cochin and Calcutta ports on some days of a month and as a result conditions of glut may be created which may cause wide fluctuations in prices. Consequently the small fishermen would suffer. To safeguard their interests marketing of catch through co-operatives and establishment of fish marketing boards at these centres have been recommended."

The Plan itself points out that the development of co-operatives, multi-purpose and credit societies, marketing societies, community projects and industrial co-operatives is hampered by the lack of competent and trained men to give community leadership in co-operative projects. "Co-operatives are sometimes organized and administered by those who lack both the qualifications and the experience necessary for the job. This factor alone accounts for a large number of the co-operatives' failures and for the uneven development of the movement in the country." The text goes on to point out that existing facilities for the training of personnel in co-operatives are not adequate. The Plan, therefore, provides a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs (1,000,000 rupees) for setting up "three or four colleges in various parts of the country to meet these needs." The Planning Commission hopes that the State governments will arrange for the training of other staff. Not only is there a shortage of trained staff, but because the main functions of the co-operative departments already established in almost all the States have been statutory and concerned with registration, audit and inspection they are not equipped to provide effective guidance to the development of the co-operative movement.

Ceylon

The Report of the International Bank mission on the economic development of Ceylon cites as the first of the general problems in connection with agricultural development: "Further considerable expansion [is required] in extension work generally and the interest and services of Co-operative Societies, Rural Development Societies and others concerned with village welfare should be fully mobilized."

The Report states that the real and effective limitation on the expansion of co-operatives in Ceylon is the shortage of competent and responsible officers for the co-operative societies. The Report recommends a further extension of training facilities at the Government School of Co-operation. The Report also recommends that credit co-operatives be authorized to make long-term loans for improvement and for expansion or consolidation of rural debt as an aid to rural development.

Pakistan

A recent editorial in the Karachi newspaper "Dawn" on the occasion of the setting up of the I.L.O. Asian Co-operative Mission at Lahore, points up what would appear to be the most important problem hampering the development of co-operation in Pakistan and in India and Ceylon as well. The editorial states that "What we need in our country is an increase in the utility more than an increase in the number of co-operative societies." It goes on to say that the co-operative movement is not playing as important a role as it ought to play in the economic life of Pakistan, where 80% of the population consists of landless peasants. Reference is made in this connection to the importance of developing multi-purpose co-operatives and to the organization of the co-operative marketing of agricultural products. The editorial concludes by suggesting that the co-operative movement in Pakistan must be given a reorientation by laying stress on providing subsidiary occupations to farmers, organization of co-operative marketing and growth of consumers' and wholesalers' co-operatives. The Government of Pakistan proposes to reorganize minor irrigation schemes for agricultural production, agricultural marketing and cottage industries on co-operative lines. "In this vast field of co-operative enterprise", the Governor of Punjab has said, "we hope to concentrate mainly on rural re-organization."
