

SIX-YEAR PLAN IN ASIA

THE Colombo Plan is not, as some people seem to think, a plan for helping people who should be helping themselves. On the contrary, the main idea is that the countries of South and South-East Asia should make an all-out effort towards their own development, while advanced countries—like New Zealand—do everything they can to help. The plan will be three years old—half its allotted lifetime—this year.

Asia Has a Plan three hour-long programmes to be heard from NZBS stations—gives a picture of work going on under the plan as D. G. Bridson, BBC Assistant Head of Features, saw it in the course of a three-months' jour-



Spencer Digby photograph
D. G. BRIDSON

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duct with an over-zealous effort to draw attention to himself. It is probably a natural failing of many people in the public eye of a television camera to inject as much as possible of their own personalities into the commercial. This, however, results in the advertised item taking second place to the announcer and from a salesmanship viewpoint this is not good advertising. The force of the spoken word is certainly reduced if the attention of the watcher is distracted by the personal attributes of the salesman or by the clothes he (or she) is wearing. The old platitude that a picture is worth a thousand words is not necessarily true in television, particularly if a bad picture results in the loss of a thousand potential sales. Wherever practicable, therefore, the camera should concentrate upon the sponsor's product and the words of the announcer should be an important but unobtrusive and friendly complement.

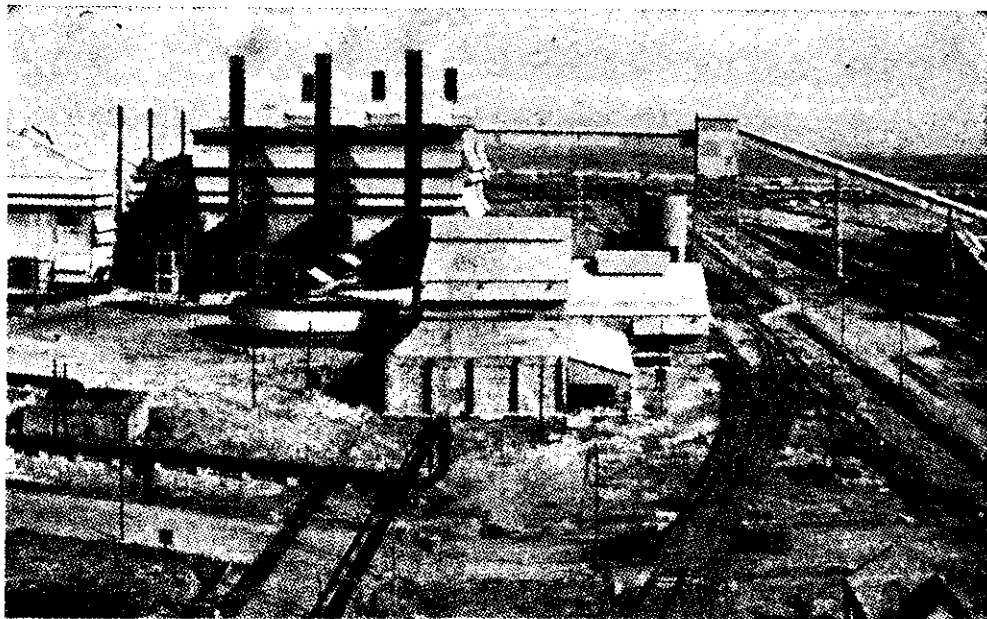
THE underlying strength in verbal advertising on radio or on television depends upon the ability of the speaker to read as if he is not reading. The unseen radio man faces an invisible audience; the TV announcer, on the other hand, looking into the cold lens of a camera, sometimes appears before a listening throng so vast that all the theatres in the world could not accommodate its millions. Under such conditions it is more than easy to forget the lines on an important commercial, and

new which took him 25,000 miles. The programme is itself an essay in Commonwealth co-operation, because it is the first project of a scheme for feature coverage of the Commonwealth, promoted by the BBC in co-operation with other Commonwealth broadcasting organisations, and agreed upon at the 1952 Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference in London. And though the programme was written in London, an Australian, Loftus Hyde, of the ABC, had a hand in it and travelled with Mr. Bridson through Ceylon, Malaya, India and Pakistan.

Mr. Bridson started his journey by Comet from London, and travelled by air, road, rail and water, from the steamy heat of Ceylon to the freezing wind of the Khyber Pass, from the bandit country of Malaya to the empty deserts of Sind and the Thal. "Always," wrote Mr. Bridson, introducing the programme in the *Radio Times*, "the object was the same: to find out what was going on, what was being done and what the country had to show for itself. Actually, a great deal was going on for every country I visited—Ceylon, Malaya, Pakistan and India—each had its own development programme, and

to aid the speaker many TV channels have introduced a mechanical device called a teleprompter. This is a screen, placed below or near the camera, on to which the words of the commercial script are conveniently projected and enlarged. From this device the announcer may read his message, while to the listening audience he should appear to be gazing into the camera. Although the teleprompter has solved one problem, it has evolved another; television engineers are now wondering how to overcome the distracting swivel developing in the eyes of teleprompted announcers.

THE Americans have passed through the early growing pains of a new industry and are slowly emerging with improved and more effective commercials. They have learned much, and their experience will be of use to every other country which is anticipating the arrival of this fascinating medium of communication. We should not hastily condemn American commercial television merely because it is not British. The Americans pioneered in this field and they know more about it than anyone else. Like all beginners they have made mistakes; but one of the great attributes of the American people is that they benefit from self-criticism. This is as true of television as of any other enterprise, and we New Zealanders would be wise if we followed closely the progress which will occur within the United States television industry.



★ ABOVE: Part of the Sindri 'fertilizer factory, Bihar—the largest fertilizer plant in Asia, and typical of the industrial projects being undertaken with Western assistance in South and South-East Asia. RIGHT: The Hon. J. T. Watts laying the foundation-stone of the All-India Medical Research Institute, New Delhi. New Zealand's contribution to this establishment will amount to £1,000,000



each was doing all that it could to better the economic plight of its people. To help that general effort—supplying technical aid in training and experts, gifts of equipment and gifts of cash—was the overall purpose of the Colombo Plan. . . Canadian fishery experts, Australian farming and livestock experts, New Zealand doctors and nurses, British engineers and costing accountants—these were only a few of the people I met assisting with the work. But invaluable as their help was proving, they were only a small handful among the vast army of able technicians that they were aiding. For first and foremost, the countries of the Colombo Plan were learning to help themselves."

New Zealand has agreed to provide £3,000,000 in capital assistance over the first three years of the plan, and by early in the third year £2,378,000 had already been transferred or earmarked for specific purposes. Of this £1,000,000 has been granted or set aside to help meet the cost of constructing the All-India Medical Institute, which will make a special feature of social and preventive medicine. Help for Pakistan has gone towards the purchase of earth-moving equipment for irrigation projects, and equipment for establishing a cement factory. New Zealand's grants to Ceylon have been used for extending laboratories and other buildings and providing equipment for a dry-farming research station. About two-thirds of Ceylon is a "dry" zone—mainly a waste of scrub jungle—and the task of the research station will be to explore

all possible ways of making this zone productive. The Indonesian Government is also to have help from New Zealand in establishing a trade-training centre. New Zealand has agreed to contribute up to £400,000 for technical aid under the Plan, and we have, of course, been host to many people from Asia who have come here for courses of training, and we have sent experts to help in India, Pakistan, North Borneo and Malaya.

The first programme in *Asia Has a Plan*, which will start from 2YC at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, March 6, examines the aims of the Plan and takes listeners on a visit to some of the projects in Ceylon and Malaya. The second programme, about India, looks in on a great multi-purpose irrigation scheme and says something about the plan to revive cottage industries and village community projects. The last of the programmes concerns Pakistan's Six Year Plan, and includes recorded interviews about the Thal Development Project, with its vast programme involving the irrigation of more than 2,000,000 acres.