

Canadian interest in that part of the world, which until 1954 had been relatively unknown to Canadians. Thus, as we enter the last quarter of this century, the growth of our links with Southeast Asia have witnessed a remarkably accelerated evolution.

The minister's activities here in the region over the last week illustrate the vitality of Canada's current relations with Southeast Asia, particularly the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Last week he met with the foreign ministers of the ASEAN countries to exchange views on global economic issues as well as regional and international political developments which concern all of us. This is the third such meeting I have attended. Yearly consultations with the ASEAN foreign ministers have become an important item on the minister's agenda. This recent meeting also afforded an opportunity to review the great progress that has been achieved during the last year in Canada-ASEAN relations. In September 1981 in New York the five ASEAN foreign ministers and Dr. MacGuigan signed an agreement on economic co-operation. The agreement establishes a framework under the aegis of a joint co-operation committee for combined co-operation in industrial, technical development and commercial fields. During the past year, specific agreements with ASEAN have also been concluded on forestry and fisheries projects. And, last month, the third Canadian-ASEAN Dialogue took place in Manila. In this dialogue views were exchanged on a wide range of economic and trade topics and specific areas for co-operation in the industrial and commercial sectors were identified — agriculture and forestry, energy, science and technology, as well as transportation, communications, human resource development, information and culture.

**Increased
economic ties**

The growth of economic and political consultations, and the expanding co-operation in development activities, attest to a strong commitment at the government-to-government level to enhancing economic ties between ASEAN and Canada. Parallel with these official links are the impressive efforts and achievements of our business sector. Commercial relations between ASEAN and Canada, viewed against our global trading patterns, have achieved important dimensions. In the period between 1975 and 1980 two-way trade between Canada and ASEAN more than trebled from a level of \$350 million to over \$1 billion. The real growth rate of Canadian exports to ASEAN from 1975 to 1980 was 19 per cent. In comparison, the growth rate of Canadian exports to the rest of the world was 6 per cent over the same period. A number of Canadian companies — among them Inco, Bata, Alcan, Northern Telecom, Husky Oil — have large investments in the area and the major Canadian banks are all represented in the region. An important event in contributing toward a more mutually beneficial relationship involving the private sector is the CANEX '82 exhibition which I will be opening here in Singapore tomorrow on behalf of the minister. This regional technology transfer exhibition, which is being funded through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has attracted over 20 Canadian firms and many candidates for joint ventures.

The tremendous growth in Canada-ASEAN relations in this field clearly illustrates the