

5.3 Provincial Co-operation

Provincial initiatives in Thailand have mostly taken the form of trade missions, often with the participation of ministers. British Columbia's interest has so far focused on housing and agri-business and more recently, efforts have been directed at establishing educational links between Thailand and the province. In this context, the B.C. Ministry of Education recently opened a Student Selection Office at Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok. The Ministry is also working with officials at St. John's College in Bangkok to place provincial teachers at that school. In addition, four British Columbia grade 12 graduates are currently on full scholarship and studying for one year in Thailand, as part of the ministry's Pacific Rim Education Initiatives Program. Thailand participated as feature country in the Pacific National Exhibition held in August and September 1990 in Vancouver.

Alberta has been one of the more active provinces in Thailand with regular ministerial visits and trade missions. Education co-operation at the post-secondary level between Alberta and Thailand also dates back more than 20 years. The Alberta government has made technical expertise available to Thailand in the area of telecommunications through Alberta Telecommunications International, and in the oil and gas sector. In particular, the Ministry of Economic Development in collaboration with PCIAC has funded sessions for Thai professionals at the Alberta Summer Institute for Petroleum Industry Development. A total of 22 professionals have participated in this program since 1983. The Alberta government has also provided funding to Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok for its Canadian Studies Program. A number of colleges and universities in the province are also involved in collaborative projects with institutions in Thailand and provide technical expertise and training. In the area of development assistance, the Alberta government has provided grants totalling approximately \$0.6 million since 1982 to fund rural development projects in Thailand through matching grants from non-governmental organizations.

The province of Saskatchewan has undertaken various activities in Thailand through their Hong Kong office. Minister of Trade and Investment Robert Andrew visited Thailand in February 1989. The province intends to increase attention in the short-term to trade opportunities in Thailand, initially in the area of potash. The Saskatchewan Research Council and the University of Saskatchewan are associated with the Thai Department of Industrial Promotion and a local firm in a project involving the transfer of technology and expertise to small and medium-sized enterprises in Thailand.

Ontario has undertaken regular general and sectoral trade missions to Thailand as well as sponsoring incoming missions in specialized fields (i.e., livestock). Hydro Ontario has an active co-operation agreement with the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand. The agreement provides for the transfer of technology and technical expertise and other commercial endeavours. Ontario's interests in Thailand are covered by the province's Agent General in Singapore. Canada's foremost national exhibition, the CNE, featured Thailand as its guest nation in August 1989.

The province of Quebec has also been very active in Thailand, sponsoring on average two trade missions each year and providing financial assistance to a number of companies interested in marketing their products and expertise in Thailand. The *Institut de recherche en électricité du Québec* has a co-operation agreement in place with the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand similar to that of Hydro-Ontario, although currently less active. The Quebec government is also offering a few merit scholarships to Thai students in areas of scientific or economic co-operation. In addition, it has arranged for an exemption on differential fees to be granted to 10 Thai students attending Quebec universities. Finally, a number of co-operative research projects are under way between universities in Quebec and Thailand in the areas of humanities, medical sciences and nutrition.

Nova Scotia undertook its first trade mission to Thailand in November 1988. This initiative may trigger a new interest on the part of the Atlantic provinces.