

an increasingly important part of which is bringing information on Canada to Hong Kong partially through a cultural programme. "I hope that through support for this programme we will be able to bring the people of Hong Kong a better understanding of Canada's cultural richness and diversity," he said.

When asked about export financing, Mr. Copithorne said that this was an important topic, and when he accompanied Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau on a trip through the region last January he had realised that Canada should become fully competitive in this regard. He pointed out that it is difficult to apply a general solution and that every sector, and if possible every project, should be looked at separately.

He felt that any commodity should be sound in terms of quality and pricing before it could qualify for export financing. Talking about large construction projects that are upcoming in Hong Kong, Mr. Copithorne said that Canadian firms might wish to get involved and that: "We will make sure that these firms will not be placed at any disadvantage on account of export financing provisions."

When it was put to him that there had been suggestions that small companies in Canada interested in export markets should form cartels in order to be more trade competitive he noted that in his experience from his own discussions with small businessmen he had not found this to be a problem, providing that they could find a niche in the market in which their products could become competitive in their own right; and work on that niche with the support of federal and provincial government representatives.

On a more general topic the Commissioner said that in his previous assignment he had developed a philosophy about the countries of the Pacific rim. "We were very excited about our work and thought that the golden age of the Pacific was on us. We felt that Canadian businessmen had set the lead here with really fantastic progress in trade with the Pacific rim countries."

He said that he and his colleagues had regarded it as their primary task to sensitize Canadians in other walks of life about the importance of the Pacific to Canada and the need to look across to the Pacific, particularly as it was clear that the next century could well belong to the Pacific rim. As a result a number of programmes have been launched in Canada to improve the communications flow about the Pacific rim in general and several important countries, including Hong Kong, in particular.

The recent and forthcoming visits by provincial premiers and federal cabinet ministers is an indication of the importance that Canada places on Hong Kong, according to Mr. Copithorne.

Two new initiatives, the Asia Pacific

Foundation and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference were described enthusiastically by the Commissioner who said that they were both "alive and very healthy."

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A 15-member founding committee consisting of people from the business, academic and cultural spheres was appointed to get the Foundation started in March this year by the Prime Minister. The members of the founding committee are people who already have dealings with and an interest in Asia and the chairman has recently been on a familiarization tour of Hong Kong.

The foundation is intended to work in areas where it is inappropriate for the government to get involved and while the committee has until next spring to report on how the Foundation should be structured and financed — with the government having pledged to match the amount of capital raised from private sources — the Commissioner had some suggestions.

He said that a business council could be

established which could, among other things, provide language training to give a better environment for businessmen to acquire the language of the country in which they are going to be living. Another function could be to provide better in-depth news coverage of Asia in Canada, possibly by bringing Canadian newsmen to Hong Kong and other countries in the region on familiarization tours.

The Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference was described by Mr. Copithorne as being: "As yet an idea with no agreed form or constitution." The conference initially began as a seminar in Southeast Asia with businessmen, academics and government servants meeting in a private capacity to discuss greater economic cooperation in the Pacific basin.

The last conference was held in Bangkok in May, 1982 and a series of task forces were established to look at means of cooperation in a wide range of fields. They will be reporting back to another full scale conference in Bali later this month, with next year's meeting scheduled for Seoul in October.

Concluding the interview, the Commissioner said that the economic relationship between Canada and Hong Kong is prospering and continuing to grow and he sees his task as assisting this progress by overcoming obstacles and improving communications. ■

## FEATURE

# Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce Boosts Two Way Trade

By J.D. McGregor

**D**uring my years with the Commerce and Industry Department of the Hong Kong Government, I visited Ottawa to discuss the perennial problem of textile imports into Canada.

I was impressed by the efficiency of that part of the bureaucratic machine with which I had contact, particularly the branch which was responsible for national statistics and their evaluation.

This was able to present a strong statistical case for some restriction on imports of certain Hong Kong textiles. It also produced some interesting statistics on immigration of Chinese people from Hong Kong.

During subsequent visits over the years to Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, I saw for myself the very large numbers of Canadian citizens of Chinese Hong Kong origin. At one stage I visited McGill

University to find a surprising number of Hong Kong students.

In recent years, I have spent happy times in Canada with Chinese friends and relatives by marriage. All testify to the ease with which they have settled down and made their way in their chosen country.

I was astonished, for example, to learn that there are over 110,000 Hong Kong Chinese in Greater Vancouver alone making up perhaps 10% of the population in that area. Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg and many other Canadian cities have large Chinese sectors within their ethnic breakdown.

What is the attraction of Canada to Hong Kong Chinese people? Such a question is cast too narrowly since Canada has been a haven of hope for two centuries for those looking to a new horizon and new opportunity.