

CANADA/THAILAND RELATIONS

Canada's interest in Thailand dates from Canadian participation in the Indochina Control Commissions and the Colombo Plan in the 1950's. Relations have broadened over the years with Canada's increased interest in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), its position as a major recipient of Indochinese refugees, and expanded trade.

Total Canadian exports to Thailand in 1987, were up from 1986, totalling \$169.2 million compared to imports of \$181.8 million. Trade between Canada and Thailand is carried out under the GATT. A Foreign Investment Insurance Agreement was signed in January 1983 and a Double Taxation Agreement in April 1984. The possibility of establishing an Economic Cooperation Agreement between Canada and Thailand is currently under consideration. Thailand is a beneficiary of Canada's General Preferential Tariff in favour of developing nations. The Thai government opened a Trade Promotion Office in Vancouver in 1985. In October 1986, air negotiations were concluded, allowing for direct passenger and air cargo services between Canada and Thailand. Thailand is Canada's dialogue co-ordinator with ASEAN until July 1988.

A new aid program for Thailand commenced in 1981 with a five year indicative planning figure of \$50 million, which has recently been increased to \$125 million. The Minister for External Relations signed seven memoranda of understanding worth \$20 million during her March 1987 visit to Thailand and announced approval in principle of a \$36 million industrial sector activities program entitled Enterprise Thailand.

The strength of the bilateral relationship is partially illustrated by the number of high level visits between the two countries. The Secretary of State for External Affairs will go to Thailand in July 1988 to attend the ASEAN PMC Meeting in Bangkok. There are approximately 300 Thai students in Canada.