



Statements and Speeches

No. 80/14

CANADA LOOKS WEST – INCREASING LINKS ACROSS THE PACIFIC

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Canadian Business Association, the Canadian Club of Hong Kong, and the Canadian University Association, Hong Kong, July 2, 1980.

...Canada's commercial and diplomatic interests in Asia go back to the early years of this century. In 1906 we established commercial offices in Shanghai and in 1928 in Hong Kong. A Canadian legation was opened in Tokyo in 1929, one of our first posts abroad.

During the Second World War, the role of Canadian troops in the tragic attempt to defend Hong Kong is still remembered. Canada played a role in the United Nations' collective security action in Korea and participated in international control commissions in Indochina from the signing of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 until the 1970s.

But our role in the Pacific has not been military primarily. Canada was one of the founding members of the Colombo Plan, and over the years we have made significant contributions to economic development in the region. In the private sector, interest in the Pacific region is reflected in strong Canadian participation in the Pacific Basin Economic Council. In fact, the Canadian Committee of this Council has for almost ten years been an official advisory committee to our government on economic policy in the Pacific, and we expect that role will enlarge in the future.

I wish to make particular reference to another area of profound common concern between Canada and Asia – and Hong Kong in particular – having deep humanitarian implications. As you know, Canada has agreed to accept 60,000 Indochinese refugees from Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia and other countries by the end of 1980. Of these, some 13,000 will have been moved from Hong Kong and, in fact, this week the 10,000 refugees who have been selected will leave Hong Kong for a new life in our country. I wish to take this opportunity to commend the government and people of Hong Kong for the compassion you have shown and the efforts you have made in providing a temporary haven for many refugees on your small and heavily populated territory.

Like many other parts of the world, the Pacific region has seen its share of human suffering. Yet, most observers agree that, in the future, the Pacific area will be unique as an area of outstanding economic growth and development. The potential is vast, and has never been more tangible than it is now. Fed by Japan's remarkable postwar growth and the trade-oriented industrialization policies of South and Northeast Asia economies, such as that of Hong Kong, the Western Pacific has enjoyed growth rates from 6 to 10 per cent a year over the past decade. In many countries exports have grown by two or three times these rates, and their shares of world markets have increased markedly. The developing countries of Asia have become increasingly

Vast potential
of Pacific
region