

Around the Region

THAILAND

Prime Minister Prem Opens Major Energy Development Symposium

The National Economic and Social Development Board's International Symposium on Thailand's Energy Policy for the Sixth Plan was held in Pattaya, October 25-26 1985.

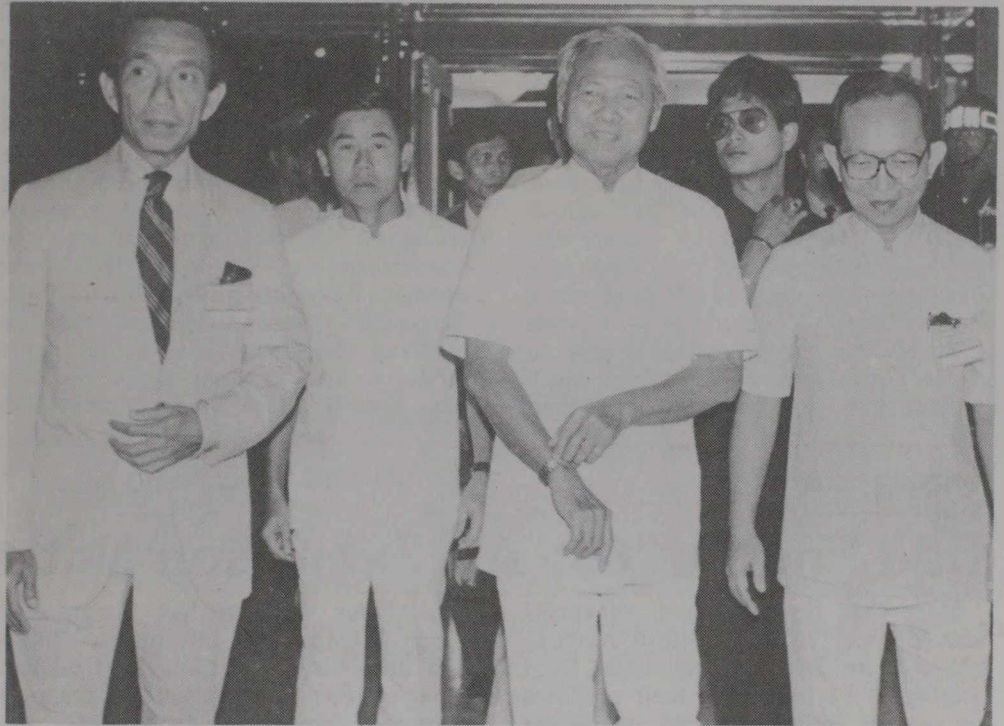
The symposium, which was sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), was attended by members of the Royal Thai Government (RTG), private enterprise, diplomatic corps, foreign and international organizations, including several Canadian companies. It dealt with key issues such as: private versus state enterprise role in the sector, investment guidelines, deregulation and import substitution policies. Production of reports by participating organizations brought together RTG departments to debate energy problems and options. As a result, RTG policy will see new directions in the deregulation of petroleum and gas prices, changes in the regulatory environment in order to increase investment by the private sector, clarification of the roles of RTG agencies, and establishment of mechanisms to encourage conservation and efficient usage.

Symposium consensus seemed to support National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) on the issue of deregulation and restricting the role of the Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT), but will require further discussion. The Prime Minister, in his address, expressed concern about the social implications of the macro policy, especially on the rural poor. He also felt that the symposium was useful in helping the cabinet to make informed decisions. Upon further review of the symposium results by the cabinet sub-committee on energy, an energy program for the Sixth Plan will be developed.

The World Bank (IBRD) was pleased with the overall outcome of the session and also CIDA's contribution. The bank would like to incorporate the same process to develop future assessments both within and outside of Thailand.

Petro Canada offered to provide up to \$10 million for exploration costs. The private sector would like to see more frequent consultation and quicker response in resolving issues impeding investment. Canadian company representatives felt that the seminar generated good will and receptiveness to Canadian business for commercial opportunities.

CIDA follow-up will include further assistance to NESDB and other RTG agencies as well as CIDA/IBRD joint efforts.



Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda is flanked by National Economic and Social Development Board Secretary-General Dr. Snoh Unakul, right, and his Deputy Phisit Pakkasem, left, on his arrival 25 October to open a two-day seminar on energy development.

Expo 86 Industrial Program

The Canadian Government has just approved a new programme to assist certain countries with their participation in EXPO 86 while enhancing Canada's industrial and commercial relationships with the participants.

The programme will be called the EXPO INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION 86 PROGRAMME and will be sponsored by the Industrial Cooperation Division of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This division of CIDA concentrates on promoting mutually beneficial long-term business firms and those of developing countries.

The programme will involve some financial support for the visit to Canada by certain officials and businessmen from participating countries. These visitors will be invited to participate in EXPO 86 itself, and many will have itineraries planned for business meetings across Canada with specifically interested companies and governmental authorities.

The programme is being organized for CIDA by Magee Robertson Inc. (MRI) of Vancouver, one of Canada's leading international marketing firms. MRI will contact participating countries to explain the programme in detail.

Canadian Group In Bangkok

The Canadian Group in Bangkok started off the fall season in high style by holding its FIRST ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER-DANCE at a local hotel. The event was so well attended that some would-be revellers were turned away at the door. Guests included a wide range of Canadians working in Thailand, many Thai friends of Canada, members of the diplomatic corps, and staff of the Canadian Embassy.

The most frequent exclamation of the evening was how "surprised" people were at the large number of Canadians living in Thailand, and how "wonderful to see such a number together in one room". Although individuals were aware that other Canadians lived in Bangkok, it seems that only dancing together is believing!

Expectations for the future include ensuring the event continues as a uniquely Canadian night and an annual fixture on the busy Bangkok social scene. The great enthusiasm generated at the event should help the Canadian Group in its new membership campaign, and in its changeover from being a women's group to being a group open to all Canadians, and friends of Canada, living in Bangkok.