

Around the Region

MALAYSIA



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (right) greets MP Keith Penner, leader of the Canadian delegation. Standing behind, (left to right), MP's Herb Breau, Les Benjamin and John Campbell.

Canadian Parliamentarians visit Malaysia

Canada's ties with Malaysia through the Commonwealth were reinforced in April by the visit of a delegation from the Canadian Parliament, as guests of the Malaysian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The delegation consisted of six Members of Parliament and two Senators and was led by the Hon. Keith Penner, MP. In the course of their six-day tour, the Parliamentarians had meetings in Kuala Lumpur with Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and in Kota Kinabalu with the

Chief Minister of Sabah, Datuk Harris Salleh.

The Canadians' host for the visit was Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam, president of the Malaysian branch of the Commonwealth association, who held a long conference with the group and organized a dinner in their honour.

At the end of the visit, Mr. Penner, on behalf of the Canadian members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, invited their Malaysian hosts to pay a return visit to Canada next year, an offer which was graciously received.

More funding approved for handpump project

The International Development Research Centre is providing funds to study the commercial potential of a low-cost village handpump that has been tested in Malaysia.

The research centre approved a second phase of the Malaysian project in April, providing \$297,000 to be spent in preparing a mass-production model of the pump. The primary aim of the project will be to gain production knowledge and attempt to reduce production costs. In addition, wide-scale field trials will be carried out, along with a study of important sociological and economic factors.

For the past six years, IDRC has been supporting research to encourage development of more effective pumping systems

for rural water supplies. A pump designed with plastic components was tested at a project in Malaysia and demonstrated it could function adequately under field conditions for two years or more.

IDRC has been collaborating with the faculty of engineering at the University of Malaya in this project, and has carried out testing in a number of countries. Its goal is to produce an inexpensive, reliable handpump that can be built and maintained at the village level.

The International Development Research Centre is a public corporation established by an Act of the Canadian Parliament in 1970 to support research designed to adapt science and technology to the specific needs of developing countries.

Literature professor gives guest lectures

The role of literature in building national identity was one of the topics discussed at the University of Malaya during the recent visit of Prof. Laurel Braswell, chairman of the English department at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Prof. Braswell spent ten days in Kuala Lumpur as guest lecturer at the university's English department, which invited her to deal with the literary traditions of both countries. She delivered a staff seminar at the university on "Themes in the work of Alice Munro and Margaret Laurence", two of Canada's foremost contemporary writers.

The ensuing discussion explored problems of defining national identity in Malaysian and Canadian novels, a subject of general interest since literary works from both countries share a place in the curriculum of Commonwealth literature. In return, Prof. Braswell has been asked by her own university to report on means of teaching Malaysian literature as part of McMaster's Southeast-Asian studies program.

During her visit, Prof. Braswell also had an opportunity to lecture on another facet of her research: the preservation of manuscripts. She delivered an address on this subject to an audience of over 100 librarians and archivists in Malaysia's impressive new National Archives.

Subsequently, she held a smaller seminar at the University of Malaya Library on the use of computers in manuscript analysis. Malaysia is a leader in ASEAN in the management of its archival heritage. Prof. Braswell was able to inform her audience of the most recent techniques developed in Canada in this field. Prior to her visit to Kuala Lumpur, Prof. Braswell stopped in Singapore where she made contact with participants to Consal VI, the Sixth Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians.



Prof. Braswell (right) with hosts S.N.R. Kazmi, head of the English department, (left), and S.M. Khoo, Chief Librarian of the University of Malaya.