

Training Canadians for Work in the Pacific Rim

■ Lorraine Chin of Vancouver considers herself to be very fortunate. As she put it, "I'm doing exactly what I want to do and I'm having fun doing it." Lorraine is a graduate student working in the Business Development Division of Berli Jucker Co. Ltd, a leading Thai trading company in Bangkok. Her one-year overseas work term is part of the curriculum of the innovative Asia-Pacific Management Program at Capilano College, Vancouver.

The Asia-Pacific Management Program is a two-year graduate program designed to offer training to Canadian university graduates or professionals who are seeking international careers in areas such as finance, international trade, development, applied technology, education, tourism, journalism, government and non-government organizations. The focus of the program is entirely on the Pacific Rim and, as its brochure announces, it "offers an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to the economic, political, geographic, cultural, social and business dynamics" of the region.

The program combines academic studies, including language training, with a four to twelve-month work term experience. Currently, there are students working with companies and organizations in Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Macau, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

In 1988, Canadian Airlines International's Bangkok office was the first recipient in Thailand of a student of this program. The experience was so positive, according to David Solloway, CAI's then resident General Manager, that he has encouraged other firms to take advantage of the program. They have done so, if numbers are any indication.

Although corporate sponsors are expected to pay salaries to the student workers, the Cooperative Program is supported by the Canadian Federal Government through Canada Employment and Immigration and

STUDENTS TODAY... BUSINESS PARTNERS TOMORROW

■ "We're interested in promoting interest and awareness in Asia and Asians among British Columbia students. Students in B.C. and Thailand today may well be business partners tomorrow."

That is how John Crawford, Manager of National and International Education for British Columbia's Ministry of Education, explained B.C.'s latest foray into international student exchanges.

For three years, B.C.'s Pacific Rim Education Initiatives program has increased teacher and student knowledge of Asia through travel and scholarship assistance. The latest project assists Asian high school students in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand who wish to study in B.C.. Offices in each of these countries carefully screen and select students for high schools throughout the province.

Thailand was chosen as the location for one of the newest offices because of Canada's expanding links with this country. "Canada's trade with Thailand is increasing and it is becoming a favourite destination for Canadian tourists," said Mr Crawford. "Furthermore, Thailand has encouraged our interest, so we decided to set up an office in Bangkok."

Bangkok's Student Selection Office, which opened in November, 1989, is under the direction of Associate Professors Chom Poomipark and Dr Suthorn Kohtbantau,

President and Secretary General, respectively, of the Education Society of Thailand. The office is housed at Srinakharinwirot University.

According to Dr Suthorn, they receive calls and visits daily from students and parents who have learned of the B.C. Student Selection Office through ads in newspapers and in the schools, and through word-of-mouth.

He explained, "Thai people are reluctant to send their children abroad at this age. However, the desire of business people to have their children educated in English is overcoming this." There will be nine Thai students attending B.C. high schools this September.

"Bringing students to B.C. from Thailand is a winning situation for all the players," said Mr Crawford. "The school district benefits from fee-paying students. The Thai student learns English and experiences Canadian culture. And our own students benefit by bringing them together with the Thai students for an extended period, providing the opportunity to forge long and lasting friendships."

Commenting on the visitors to their new B.C. Student Selection Office, Dr Suthorn said, "Many are just curious. They want to know about education in Canada. Is it different from America or England or Australia?" Laughing, Dr Suthorn concluded, "So of course I tell them ... Canada is better!"

CIDA, and by British Columbia's Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training.

The benefits for the students are clear. For the sponsor, the program provides a cost effective way of recruiting talented individuals. One need only talk to some of them and hear comments like "very keen" and "highly motivated", to begin to wonder who is reaping most of the benefits, the students or the companies?