

The Ontario Premier and Trade and Industry Minister visited several countries of ASEAN, and the Alberta Minister for International Trade led an oil and gas delegation to Thailand in early 1984. The federal Minister for International Trade also represented Canada at the Brunei independence celebrations in February 1984.

ASEAN relations with Canada were highlighted by the visit to Canada of the Malaysian Prime Minister in January 1984. During this visit, a \$147-million contract was signed for the construction by a Canadian company of a pulp and paper complex in Sabah.

As a further sign of the strengthening of the relationship with ASEAN, the first meeting of the Joint Consultation Committee was held in Ottawa in April 1983, followed by the attendance of the Secretary of State for External Affairs at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Conference Post-Ministerial Discussions in Bangkok in June. From these contacts have come programs as diversified as the CANEX 83 joint-venture exhibition in Singapore, the attendance of a Canadian observer to the ASEAN International Parliamentary Organization, a Canadian tour for ASEAN journalists, the stationing of a representative of the Canadian Commercial Corporation in Kuala Lumpur to service the ASEAN region, and the conclusion of an air agreement between Canada and Singapore, which was expected to lead to a greater two-way flow of tourists and businessmen.

Australia and New Zealand

A Canadian priority in relations with Australia was to bring the Canada-Australia Trade Agreement up to date. This was a central topic of the meetings between the Minister for International Trade and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade of Australia, in Ottawa in August and in Canberra in November.

In addition, there were six other ministerial visits during the year. The Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of National Defence, visited Australia in April, and from Australia came the Minister for Primary Industry, in July; the Minister of Finance, in August; the Minister for Science and Technology, in January; and the Minister for Aviation, also in January.

With the continuation of the recession in Australia, Canadian exports to that country amounted to only \$438 million in 1983 (compared to \$650 million in 1982). Imports also declined to \$358 million from \$446 million in 1982. Capital goods and consumer durables continued to play an important role in Canada's export trade although the principal export items were sulphur, cedar lumber, potassium chloride and newsprint paper. Major end-products included motor vehicle parts, computer equipment and telephone apparatus. Major import items from Australia were raw sugar, metal ores, alumina and beef.

The Department sponsored a major technology seminar and exhibition in Melbourne and Sydney, from February 20 — March 2, 1984, "Canada at the Leading Edge of Technology". Twenty Canadian firms were represented in the videotex, communications, computer and industrial process control sectors.

Canadian concerns about the New Zealand import licensing regime were expressed during the meetings of the Canada-New Zealand Consultative Committee held in Wellington in November. New Zealand representatives said their government was committed to the gradual liberalization of the im-

port licence regime over the next few years.

Canadian exports to New Zealand amounted to \$122 million in 1983 with principal items being sulphur, newsprint paper, zinc, potassium chloride and polyethylene resins. Computer, telecommunications and telephone equipment items were also sold in quantity. Principal imports of the \$156 million total were frozen beef, lamb, apples and wool.

The Minister for International Trade led a Canadian business mission to Australia and New Zealand in November 1983. A wide cross-section of Canadian business and industry was represented.

In January 1984, the New Zealand Prime Minister opened a major Canada-New Zealand joint venture — the \$226-million (New Zealand currency) Petrolgas Plant at Taranaki, which produces methanol from natural gas. Petrolgas is owned 49 per cent by Alberta Gas Chemicals and 51 per cent by Petrocorp, the New Zealand national petroleum company.

Public affairs programs continued actively in Australia and New Zealand and a number of performing groups toured the two countries. The Canadian Studies Association received additional support during the year.

The South Pacific

In Papua New Guinea, Phase II of the mammoth OK Tedi copper-gold mining development was still under consideration. Other active sectors of interest to Canada included air transportation, power generation and forestry.

Africa and the Middle East

The Middle East

Canada continued its efforts to strengthen and expand its political and economic ties with the Middle East. Total exports to the region showed a modest increase over those of the previous year, with Saudi Arabia remaining Canada's largest market in the area. It was announced that a Canadian embassy would be opened in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates in the autumn of 1984.

The year was marked by many bilateral visits, including those of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Israel in October 1983; of a sub-committee of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs to Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Israel and Egypt in November; and of the Prime Minister to Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates in December. Another example of Canadian activity was the visit of the Minister of State (Finance) to Egypt in November, to attend the third annual meeting of the Egypt-Canada Business Council and to participate in the opening ceremonies of MISR Can Tech '83, a transfer-of-technology exhibition.

There was little apparent progress towards resolving the area's political problems. Violence continued in Lebanon, the Multinational Force left Beirut and diplomatic efforts aimed at a political solution failed to yield significant results. Canada maintained its support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, and sought the withdrawal of all foreign forces except those whose continued presence was explicitly requested by the Lebanese government. Canada also indicated its support for the efforts to bring about a lasting national reconciliation.

Because of concern over the casualties and suffering resulting from the recurrent fighting, Canada made several