



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH ASIA

An address by the Prime Minister Mr. L.S. St. Laurent, delivered to the Women's Canadian Club, Victoria, B.C., September 5, 1952.

... Most Canadians realize that Canada is a Pacific as well as an Atlantic power and that if our nation is to achieve its maximum development and to maintain a maximum of security, particular attention must be given to our relations with the countries of the vast Asiatic continent which lie on the far side of the Pacific.

As with our relations with the rest of the world, Canada's activities in Asia are based on the twin principle of preservation of peace and stimulation of international trade. We Canadians like other peace-loving peoples believe that by serving the cause of peace and by working for greater interchange of commodities between nations, we are working in the interests of all men and women everywhere.

From our history books, indeed from the very first lessons in them, we Canadians have learned that Asia has had a considerable influence on the development of our country. We have read that the first contacts made by Europeans on this continent were the result of a search for a shorter route to the riches of the Orient. And our studies in history show that even after the first settlements were precariously established this quest for a westerly route to the Far East continued and contributed in no small degree to the opening up of this continent.

- Even when the true size of North America became realized and hope for finding an Oriental trade route by way of North America was abandoned, some of the explorers and fur traders sent out by their companies to the west and north to discover new sources of fur remained aware of the prospects offered by trade with the Far East. For example, Alexander Mackenzie, who almost 160 years ago was the first white man to cross the continent north of Mexico, formulated the plan of associating in one vast enterprise the fur trade of Canada and the fishing industry of Britain with the markets of China. While Mackenzie's dream of extensive Canadian trade with the Orient had to wait another 100 years to be fulfilled it presaged a development which is of great importance to Canadians today.

That is enough of our excursion into history. It shows that trade has influenced our relationship with the Far East far back in Canada's history. Now I would like to speak a few minutes on the other principle that I