

4. Japan

Since recovering complete independence in 1952, Japan has re-emerged as the leading industrial power of the Far East. Canadian-Japanese relations during 1955 were marked by the conclusion of agreements respecting air services between the two countries and the waiving on a reciprocal basis of non-immigrant visa fees. The Canadian and Japanese Governments co-operated in the North Pacific Fisheries Commission as well as in the Colombo Plan, and an increasing number of official and unofficial visitors from Japan came to Canada and vice versa. For example, the Japanese Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr. Ichiro Kono, and a party of experts, as well as a delegation from the Japanese Diet, visited Canada in September. An unofficial group of about twenty Canadian university students and professors attended the World University Service Seminar held in Japan during the summer, and the Canadian Minister of Fisheries visited Tokyo briefly in September.

5. Southeast Asia

Although Canada's relations with Southeast Asia are limited by our remoteness from the area and by the fact that, aside from our special missions in Indochina, we are represented diplomatically only in Indonesia, our relations with the countries of this area have grown closer in the United Nations and in other ways. Canadian participation in the Colombo Plan is a most important link. The Secretary of State for External Affairs attended the Colombo Plan conference in Singapore in October and later visited Malaya, where he had useful discussions with some of the leaders of the newly-elected Legislative Council. This Council is likely to play a prominent role in Malaya's progress towards self-government and independence.

The most important international event in the Southeast Asian area during 1955 was undoubtedly the Asian-African Conference held at Bandung, Indonesia, from April 18 to April 24. This conference was sponsored by the so-called Colombo Powers (Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan) and had as its objectives the promotion of goodwill and co-operation among the nations of Asia and Africa; the consideration of social, economic, and cultural problems of the countries represented, as well as problems of special interest to the Asian and African peoples; and an assessment of the position of Asia and Africa in the world and the contribution they could make to world peace and co-operation. Delegations from 29 countries, including a Communist Chinese delegation headed by Mr. Chou En-lai, attended the conference. Canada did not, of course, have any direct connection with the conference, but a message of good wishes sent by Mr. St. Laurent to the chairman was well received.

The Indonesian parliamentary elections which began on September 29 and extended until November 29 constituted another event of more than passing interest. Although most of the voting took place on the first day, two months were allowed for delayed balloting in remote areas where difficult security conditions still exist. These were the first such elections held since Indonesia achieved independence, but the very fact that they were carried out in spite of tremendous difficulties is an indication of the determination of the people of yet another Southeast Asian country to conduct their affairs by genuinely democratic processes.