

impression on the Department's interest in Asia which continues to this day.

Our focus has not just been on the northern part of Asia. One of the first Canadian trade officials posted abroad opened a trade office in Sydney, New South Wales, in 1895. Next year marks the centenary of Canada's trade relationship with Australia and a number of events are being planned to underline the importance of the Canada-Australia relationship.

Links between Canada and the Asia-Pacific developed rapidly in the early 20th century and were strengthened through the efforts of the private sector, including the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company whose "Empress" liners plied between the west coast of Canada and many Asian ports.

Because our forces were mainly engaged in Europe, Canadians did not participate as extensively as Australians in the Asia-Pacific theatre during the Second World War, but a regiment of young Canadians fought and died defending the British Colony of Hong Kong. Canada's wartime links with Australia are many and varied: the Royal Newfoundland Regiment served alongside Australian and New Zealand troops in Gallipoli; a Canadian signals contingent served in Darwin intercepting Japanese communications in 1944-45; some 10 000 Australian airmen trained in Canada under the Commonwealth air training plan in the 1940s; and Canadian and Australian troops served in Korea as part of a Commonwealth division. More recently, we have both put peacekeeping troops into places like Cambodia and Somalia.

Canada became involved in Indo-China in the early 1950s, not as a protagonist, but as a peacekeeper. Canadian military and diplomatic personnel served in this capacity during the two Indo-China control commissions. The legacy of that interest in, and commitment to Southeast Asia, remains to this day, as evidenced by our involvement in the Cambodian peace process and our provision of military personnel there. Canadian forces are still there helping to remove mines, and a Canadian officer is in charge of demining training.

Canada was one of the original members of the Colombo plan which began in the early 1950s. As well, Canada was one of the founders of the Asian Development Bank and is still its third-largest contributor. Indeed, 30 per cent of Canada's annual development assistance budget of just over \$1 billion is disbursed in the Asia-Pacific region.

Today Canada's relationship with the Asia-Pacific is varied and increasingly dynamic.

The export of Canadian goods and services accounts for over one quarter of Canada's gross domestic product and, in recent years,