

Canada's Focus on the Pacific

THE Pacific Rim Opportunities Conference provided for a major discussion on Canadian relations with countries in the Pacific. It was organized and chaired by Canada's Minister of State for Trade the Honourable Ed Lumley and took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, from November 19-21, 1980. The Conference was attended by approximately 250 senior Canadian businessmen and others who have current or potential interests in Canadian trade and economic relations with the Pacific countries.

Representatives of the federal and provincial governments, labour, and academia joined the group on the first day when the speakers' topic was Canadian relations with and interests in specific Pacific countries.

On the second day the Conference covered aspects and instruments of trade and investment in the region, including export financing, technology transfer, and joint ventures. A session was also held to involve businessmen in discussion of the evolving concept of the growing "Pacific Community."

A number of federal ministers, including the Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan, addressed the conference, as did provincial government ministers and prominent business leaders who are active in the Pacific region.

Mr. Lumley invited diplomatic representatives from the Pacific countries to attend the public functions of the Conference to meet with the participants. All the heads of post of the ASEAN countries accredited to Canada attended and, during the course of the two days, undertook private exchanges of views with many of the public- and private-sector officials present.

The Conference generally served to heighten awareness within the Canadian private sector of the potential for expanded and more mutually beneficial economic and commercial relations with the countries of the Pacific region.

One recurrent theme was the need to recognize the goals and the aspirations of Canada's economic partners in expanding business activities. Another was the importance of a better understanding of each other's cultures and societies, and the role played by the development of connections in various fields as a foundation for long-term and mutually rewarding economic ties.



ASEAN envoys to Canada met Canadian heads of mission accredited to the ASEAN countries at the Pacific Rim Opportunities Conference in Vancouver. L-R seated: Charge d'affaires Mohd. Azhari Karim (Malaysia); His Excellency Widodo Budidarmo (Indonesia); H.E. Tommy Koh (Singapore); Asst. Under-Secretary of State, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, W.T. Delworth; H.E. Chinda Attanan (Thailand); H.E. Ramon V. del Rosario (Philippines). L-R standing: Canadian High Commissioner to Malaysia J.R. Francis; Ambassador to Indonesia W.H. Montgomery; High Commissioner to Singapore L.M. Berry; Ambassador to Thailand F. Bild; Ambassador to the Philippines E.L. Bobinski.

Excerpts from a speech given by Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan at the Pacific Rim Opportunities Conference:

... WHILE there is so much confidence in the economic future of the Pacific area, there is also some uncertainty about precisely what must be done to develop and direct the forces shaping the future for the maximum benefit of all countries in the region. How should we, as members of a vast and diverse neighbourhood, organize ourselves to derive mutual advantage from the challenges of the future? As you know, one important idea now in play is the notion of a "Pacific Community" organization constituted essentially to come to grips with economic problems in the first instance. Yet despite the considerable interest and momentum that has been built up in recent months, the concept has encountered and indeed generated a number of reservations, mainly political, which suggest that a structured community may take some time to shape. But the sense of community is there, and we must build on it.

To date, Canadians in the private sector, in government and in the academic world have shown an active interest in helping to build this Pacific Community, and a readiness to participate in the evolution of the concept from the outset. All of us who are interested in these questions have been approaching the political issues of membership, organization and the community's eventual responsibilities in a deliberate and careful spirit, but with open minds and in a positive fashion.

... Canada has been historically associated with the Pacific in many other diverse ways. We opened our first commercial office in the region in Sydney in 1895. Melbourne, Yokohama and Shanghai followed on swiftly in the next few years. In 1929 one of Canada's first diplomatic posts abroad was our Legation in Tokyo. On the human side, an inflow of Chinese helped open the Canadian West, while a later substantial outflow of missionaries provided many Asians with their first close look at Canada and Canadians—and gave Canadians their first real sense of involvement in the problems of Asia.

And who could not, in more recent times, remember the role of Canadian troops in Hong Kong in the Second World War, and later in Korea? In working for peace and stability in the region we have participated in various forms of control commissions in Indochina, and we have contributed to the economic development of the region through the Colombo Plan, the Asian Development Bank, and bilateral aid programs.

Canadian provincial governments have made a significant contribution to Canada's presence and activities in the region. And so has Canada's private sector, both through a