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## B.C. Opens ASEAN Trade and Investment Office in Singapore

On April 10, British Columbia, Canada's Pacific Province, officially opened its first regional representative office serving Singapore and the ASEAN region. This event marks a logical step in the rapid development of investment and trading links between ASEAN and British Columbia over the past 12 months.

The opening occasioned a four-day visit to Singapore by the Honourable John Jansen, British Columbia's Minister of International Business. There he met with the Minister for Finance, Dr Richard Hu, the heads of the Economic Development Board and Trade Development Board, Singapore Manufacturers' Association, and Singapore's private business community. The main topic of discussion was the furthering of two-way investment and trade between Singapore and British Columbia.

The past year has witnessed several major events in British Columbia-Singapore relations. Singapore Airlines opened a direct air link with Vancouver. Singapore appointed Nathaniel T. Nemetz, former Chief Justice of British Columbia, as Honorary Consul in Vancouver to serve Singapore interests in British Columbia and Alberta.

Significant commercial investments were made by Singapore companies in British Columbia. Most notable were Yeo Hiap Seng's S\$11.2 million investment in a Vancouver canning plant to support its new beverage facility, and Singapore Press Holdings' S\$10.3 million investment to set up, with eight overseas partners, a newsprint mill on Vancouver Island.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Minister Jansen noted: "British Columbia is already known as a competitive and reliable supplier of commodity-related items such as newsprint, wood-pulp, aluminium, lead and zinc. In addition, however, British Columbia is developing export-oriented secondary manufacturing and service industries producing high-value, technically sophisticated products in the fields of electronics, aerospace, ocean engineering and computer software, which contribute an estimated S\$1.6 billion to provincial output and employ

a highly-trained workforce of 12,000. Many of these industries are similar to industries in Singapore and we feel that British Columbia and Singapore can benefit substantially from commercial cooperation in these high-tech industries in terms of two-way investment, and joint ventures involving technology exchange."

The Minister also mentioned that, as a result of two recent trade shows in information technology and telecommunications in Singapore in the past six months, two British Columbia companies will be opening offices to service the ASEAN region and another four are appointing agents and distributors. "There are at present eight British Columbia companies with commitments in this region," he said, "and

we anticipate this development to accelerate substantially with the establishment of our new representative office here."

Mr Jansen announced the appointment of Mr R.A. Food as Director of the office. Mr Food's appointment is an indication of the importance placed on this office by the British Columbia Government. The former Acting Deputy Minister of International Business has 14 years' experience in senior government positions in British Columbia, responsible for trade and economic development. Prior to public service in British Columbia, he was an executive with Canadian Pacific and Canadian Trade Commissioner in Tokyo and Lagos, Nigeria.



Minister Jansen, aided by Mr Philip Yeo, Chairman of the Economic Development Board of Singapore, cutting the ribbon at the opening of British Columbia's ASEAN region office

## B.C. MINISTER VISITS MALAYSIA

Minister Jansen also visited Malaysia before returning home. He took the opportunity to visit a joint-venture project between Columbia Chrome of Langley, British Columbia, and Tractors Malaysia. The recently-inaugurated plant, located near Kuala Lumpur, offers hard chroming and hydraulic assembly repair services.

British Columbia is Canada's leading exporter to Malaysia, accounting for 35% of Canadian trade in the country. A dynamic centre of Canadian business activity, British Columbia exports products from a range of traditional resource-based industries, such as timber, minerals and fisheries, as well as in such high-tech fields as electronics, computer software, aerospace and marine-undersea equipment manufacturing.