

Overview

Alberta Premier Ralph Klein led a mission to China and South Korea from May 31 to June 9, 2004. Bob Maskell, MLA for Edmonton-Meadowlark, who has spent two decades developing educational and cultural ties between Alberta and its sister-provinces in Korea and China, accompanied the Premier on the mission.

During the mission, Premier Klein met with government and business leaders and updated them on developments in Alberta's energy industry; emphasized the safety of Alberta beef; strengthened Alberta's sister-province relationship with Heilongjiang, China, and Gangwon, Korea; and participated in the signing of agreements to increase cooperation in energy, science and technology, and education.

China is Alberta's third largest trading partner with exports averaging \$739 million per year between 1999 and 2003. Annual two-way trade is valued at approximately \$2 billion. Alberta's exports to Korea averaged \$463 million yearly between 1999 and 2003. Annual two-way trade averaged approximately \$930 million during the same period, making South Korea Alberta's fourth largest trading partner.

The mission was successful in meeting its objectives as outlined below.

Mission Objectives

China:

- build on the successes of the long history between Alberta and China in the energy sector as China's energy needs expand with its rapid economic growth;
- contribute to the goal established by Canada and China to double bilateral trade by 2010 and promote Alberta business interests in China;
- strengthen relationships with key Chinese ministries including the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Education;
- meet with the Chinese Animal Quality Standards Inspection and Quarantine agency to press for the reopening of China's market to Canadian beef and beef products following the closure in 2003 due to one case of BSE in Alberta; and
- visit Heilongjiang, Alberta's sister province, to explore further avenues for cooperation, and build on our history of successful cooperation in public sector reform, in partnership with the University of Alberta, as a model to expand collaboration to other areas of public-sector training.

Korea:

- strengthen relationships with Korean companies investing in Alberta, particularly in the energy sector and enhance Alberta's profile within the Korean business community;
- formalize relations with the Korean Ministry of Science and Technology to facilitate collaborations in research and innovation;
- press Korea's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to re-open the Korean market to Alberta beef and beef products following its closure in 2003; and
- celebrate the 30th anniversary of Alberta's oldest sister-province relationship with Gangwon.

ResultsChina:

June 2

At a meeting with Mr. Fu Ziying, China's Assistant Minister of Commerce, Premier Klein emphasized that Alberta would like to increase its trade and investment activities in China. The Premier also encouraged China to lift its sanctions against Canadian beef and beef products as soon as possible.

During a meeting with more than 50 representatives of Alberta companies active in China, the Premier reinforced the province's commitment to the Chinese market, and heard from the business leaders about their experiences doing business in China to better understand the challenges and barriers they face.

In a speech to more than 200 people at the Canada-China Business Council luncheon, the Premier provided background information about Alberta, highlighted opportunities for business partnerships in the province, and outlined the benefits Alberta companies can bring to China.

The Premier also participated in the signing of agreements between Alberta and Chinese partners on:

- Education – As a result of Learning Minister Lyle Oberg's education mission to China in 2002, the agreement sets out the terms for cooperation between Alberta Learning and China's Ministry of Education in key areas such as student mobility; promotion of Chinese studies in Alberta; language teaching assistants exchange; the posting of a Chinese language advisor to Alberta; and the introduction of an English international studies program based on the Alberta curriculum.
- Science and Technology – The agreement commits the two partners to work together to identify areas for cooperation and exchanges in scientific, technological, and industrial research in the public and private sectors, and between educational institutions.
- China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC)-Alberta Petroleum Centre – The agreement renews the arrangement between Alberta Economic Development and the CNPC on the joint operation of the petroleum centre in Beijing. It facilitates cooperation between Alberta and China in energy industry expertise.



June 3

During a speech to more than 100 students at Peking University's Guanghua School of Management, Premier Klein raised the awareness of China's future leaders about Alberta and Canada.

The Premier later updated senior Chinese energy industry representatives on Alberta's energy expertise and oil sands investment opportunities.

He then met with officials from China's Animal Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine agency to reinforce the quality and safety of Canada's beef industry and encourage them to move quickly to reopen markets to Canadian beef and beef products. MLA Maskell met with representatives of the National Ballet of China and the Beijing Dance Academy to forge improved cultural relations. He later visited the Beijing Yucai School, a top school in China, to explore their interest in offering the Alberta International Program.

June 4

In Harbin, the capital city of Alberta's sister-province Heilongjiang, Premier Klein and Heilongjiang's newly appointed Governor Zhang Zuoji signed two agreements. The agreement on science and technology facilitates cooperation in research and helps identify commercial opportunities. An education agreement facilitates the accreditation of schools in Heilongjiang to offer the Alberta International Program.

At an Alberta-hosted reception for the Heilongjiang Public Service Training Program, the Premier thanked the government of Heilongjiang for its continued commitment to the program. Since 2002, 85 public sector officials from Heilongjiang have taken part in the program at the University of Alberta.

MLA Maskell met with the Mayor of Harbin, Edmonton's sister-city, and visited Harbin School #6 to discuss school twinning relationships.

June 5

Premier Klein highlighted the long-standing Alberta-Heilongjiang twinning relationship with Heilongjiang Party Secretary General Song Fatang. Mr. Song was formerly Heilongjiang Governor and visited Alberta in 2001.

June 7

In Seoul, Korea, Premier Klein met with representatives of two Korean energy companies with investments in Alberta— Seoul City Gas, which opened an office in Alberta in 2001, and the Korea National Oil Corporation. He updated them on recent developments in Alberta's energy industry and emphasized the security and abundance of Alberta's energy supplies.

During a keynote address to a Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Korea luncheon, the Premier provided background on Alberta, highlighted the Alberta Advantage, and promoted the province's world-class education system, robust investment climate, and



burgeoning energy supplies to more than 60 business leaders and potential investors. The Premier met with Huh Sang-man, Korea's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry to emphasize the safety and security of Canadian beef and beef products, and discuss how Alberta and Korea can work together to resume beef trade.

In a follow-up to Alberta Innovation and Science Minister Victor Doerksen's visit to Korea in February 2004, Premier Klein and Im Sang-Gyu, Korea's Vice Minister of Science and Technology, signed a Letter of Intent to establish channels for research cooperation in nanotechnology, information technology, and other areas of interest.

June 8

In Chunchŏn, the capital city in Alberta's sister-province of Gangwon, Premier Klein and Governor Kim Jin-Sun signed the 30th Anniversary Reaffirmation of Friendship and Affiliation Agreement. At the signing, the Premier emphasized that Alberta is proud of its relationship with Gangwon and looks forward to successful collaborations in the years to come.

MLA Maskell met with the Vice-Superintendent of the Gangwon Board of Education to discuss the Korean Teachers of English Program (K-TEP). Since 1984, more than 400 Korean teachers of English have travelled to Alberta to develop their teaching skills through K-TEP.

June 9

Following meetings with education officials to discuss partnership opportunities, MLA Maskell traveled to Gangneung to represent Alberta at the Gangwon International Folklore Festival, which featured the White Buffalo Dancers and Drummers Society from Alberta. Premier Klein returned to Alberta.

Official Delegation

- Premier Ralph Klein
- Bob Maskell, MLA Edmonton-Meadowlark
- Rich Jones, Office of the Premier