

positive reaction has encouraged him to view favourably the commissioning of a study which we hope will be under way soon.

Although our thinking is in a preliminary stage, we consider that the potential benefits of such a foundation could be significant. I would be very interested to know if you share this view.

Broadly stated, the purpose of a Canada foundation for Asia and the Pacific would be to develop programs aimed at increasing the understanding of Canada to those countries and to develop a greater knowledge and awareness of those countries amongst Canadians. It would serve as a symbol of Canada's commitment to the countries and peoples of the Asia/Pacific world and the development of more sophisticated and stable longer-term relationships which could be beneficial to all concerned. I am not suggesting that a foundation would be a panacea in meeting all of the difficulties which we face in meeting our objectives. Nor do I look upon this initiative as a short-term solution; it would be an investment reflecting not only our interest in the region but also our confidence in the longer-term prospects for enhanced co-operation.

I believe it would be wise to give such a foundation considerable autonomy from government direction, although if federal funds were involved there would have to be some consistency with general government policy.

Need for support

This is of course only a thumbnail sketch of our thinking at this point which I must stress is still notional. The first requirement in developing such a concept would be a decision as to the nature and scope of the foundation's purposes. The second is to ascertain the degree of interest in Canada from those at all levels of government and the private sector who would be prepared to participate in such an undertaking. Needless to say we see this as a collaborative effort requiring the support of the various Canadian communities with interests in Asia and the Pacific. As I mentioned earlier I would be grateful for views you might have on the creation of the type of foundation I have outlined.

I want to assure you that our motives are far from abstract and effete. The stimulation of mutual awareness should expose to a much broader spectrum of Canadians, as well as people from the region, a core of common interests, shared values and mutual concerns which lie just beneath the surface differences of language, culture and tradition. This in itself could make a significant contribution to Canada's economic and political objectives in this important part of the world.

In conclusion I would only restate our view that Canada's relations with the countries of the Asia/Pacific world have become increasingly complex over the past two decades. There is little doubt of the potential for further collaboration and of the growing opportunities in the region for Canada. However, many consider that we have fallen short in pursuing our interests and that more needs to be done to assist in meeting our expectations. Imagination and innovation will be required in meeting this challenge. I would suggest that the intellectual, cultural and social awareness which could be stimulated by a Canadian foundation for Asia and the Pacific could make an important contribution to the process.

S/C