

Commonwealth, which he hoped would provide Australia with an opportunity to fulfil its growing leadership aspirations.

Canadian officials occasionally worried about Australia's growing economic and political presence in the Pacific and in the Commonwealth. For instance, Paul Martin, now serving as Canada's high commissioner to Britain, fretted in 1979 that "Australia [would] steal a march over us" by assuming the lead in Commonwealth discussions on southern Africa.⁴⁸ But most Canadian observers were excited by Australia's re-emergence as a "like-minded middle power, willing to act decisively and constructively."⁴⁹ Australia's enhanced profile in the Pacific confirmed Ottawa's inclination to view Australia as an increasingly important partner in Canada's efforts to increase trade with Japan and to ensure regional stability by supporting such organizations as ASEAN. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Canada and Australia found themselves comfortably aligned not only when dealing with such Pacific questions as Cambodia's civil war, but also when confronted by crises in southern Africa, Afghanistan and Poland.

This successful multilateral partnership had its bilateral dimension as official and unofficial contacts between the two countries multiplied in the late 1970s. Growing interest in each other's cultural and intellectual life, for example, led to the creation of the Canada-Australia Literary Award in 1976. At the same time, comparative studies in the two countries were more clearly defined when the Canadian-Australian Colloquium, the Canadian visiting fellowship at Macquarie University, and the Australian Association for Canadian Studies were established in 1981. Similarly, official contacts increased dramatically. In the first two months of 1977 alone, for instance, the two governments signed agreements on the exchange of information regarding energy research, aboriginal peoples, and crime prevention and criminal justice. By 1980, there were official exchange programs between Canadian and Australian departments responsible for statistics, aboriginal people, labour, justice and defence. Australia's only complaint--a traditional one--was that far too few Canadian politicians visited Australia. The problem soon abated. In one 18-month period in 1979-1981, the premiers of Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan all travelled independently to Australia. They were followed by nine other federal and provincial cabinet ministers. In June 1981, the growing number of Canadian contacts with Australia prompted Ottawa to add a new consulate in Perth to its existing posts in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney.

The sudden vigour of the relationship caught both countries by surprise. In neither capital did politicians and officials seem aware of the complete range of bilateral contacts and the possibilities for further cooperation. As a consequence, neither Australia nor Canada seemed able to measure the importance of individual issues against the value of the entire relationship. As