

It is only through such co-operative efforts that we can hope to achieve a cohesive and coherent approach. I am gratified to discover that this is occurring in response to the call for a Canada Foundation for Asia and the Pacific, an idea which made its appearance at the first Pacific Rim Opportunities Conference in Vancouver; a foundation, removed somewhat from government, has been suggested as a means of promoting the growth of awareness and mutual understanding between Canada and its Pacific partners and as a body to co-ordinate in the manner of a clearing house, the broad range of Canadian activities in the Asian and Pacific region. While very much attracted to the idea as an answer to the problem we have long perceived in our relations with the region -- the need for greater understanding and the absence of co-ordination -- we recognize the limits of government, acting alone to promote such an endeavour.

It was in this spirit that I decided to ask Mr. John Bruk of Vancouver to study the feasibility of establishing a foundation. Since he embarked on this task it has become apparent that there is a great deal of interest in the idea -- more than any of us had anticipated. I am particularly pleased at the way that the private sector and the universities have co-operated to move the foundation idea forward. Quite independent of Mr. Bruk's study, but in parallel with it, a series of symposia, beginning with one held jointly by York University and the University of Toronto in December, has been and is being held to examine all aspects of such a concept; others are to be held at the University of Montreal and at the University of British Columbia. Representatives of the business community have been active participants in this process. Similarly, other important elements of Canadian public opinion, such as the media, the churches and the trade unions, have interests in the totality of our foreign relations and will wish to be consulted.

We have passed the crossroads in our relations with Asia. We have achieved a great deal. As we look West, however, to the ancient civilizations and new opportunities represented by our partners across the Pacific, we must demonstrate our commitment and our seriousness. We must redouble our efforts to develop the broader understanding that is the cement necessary for these new and dynamic relationships. The challenge is there. If we approach it in the manner of the co-operation marked by this conference we will have reason to be confident.