> using extremely foul language. He launched into a diatribe
> against Canada. . . . He suggested that Canada was tied to
> Mr. Churchill's apron strings, and complained of what he
> regarded as Canada's empty gestures to Australia.[23]

Canadian assistance, when it was finally offered as part of Canada's multilateral Mutual Aid program in May 1943, did little to improve Australia's view of its Commonwealth colleague. Ottawa insisted that Australia agree to reduce its tariffs and trade barriers at the end of the war before it would actually send any aid. Only after a good deal of bickering did the two countries manage to effect a compromise in early 1944.

These bilateral tensions were partly moderated by the web of personal relationships that the war spawned between officials in the two governments. As a result, recalled one Canadian diplomat, "[t]here developed a collaboration in international organizations so habitual that it was taken for granted by the 1950s."[24] These officials quickly discovered a mutual interest in making certain that the concerns of the small and middle powers in the postwar international system were not ignored by the great powers. Canada and Australia, however, differed on how to achieve this. For the Australian prime minister, John Curtin, the solution lay in transforming the Commonwealth into an institution that would rival the major powers in stature and influence. Canadian officials were suspicious of suggestions for closer Commonwealth consultation, which they feared might limit Canada's flexibility in dealing with the United States. Mackenzie King took an even dimmer view of Curtin's ideas. Such notions, he fumed, were part of a "deliberate design . . . to revive an imperialism which left the Dominions something less than national sovereignty" and represented "an attack on his personal position."[25]

The difference in approach was even greater at the United Nations, where Evatt enjoyed a free hand in shaping Australian policy. The outspoken and combative foreign minister preferred to attack head-on the privileges enjoyed by the great powers. At the U.N.'s founding conference in San Francisco in 1945, he stubbornly opposed every clause in the U.N.'s charter that seemed to weaken the new organization or that gave the major powers undue influence. While some Canadian officials quietly admired Evatt's determination to strengthen the U.N., most were dismayed by his confrontational tactics. As cold war tensions reduced the likelihood that the great powers would achieve a sufficient level of cooperation to ensure the survival of the U.N., discretion seemed the greater part of valour:

> Our view [observed a senior Canadian official] is that it is
> better to take the Organization that we can get and, having
> come to that decision, to refrain from further efforts to pry
> apart that difficult unity which the Great Powers have attained.