

in response to these pressing needs. While they have done an outstanding pioneering job in this region and have much to contribute, there is a growing risk of their efforts becoming fragmented, unco-ordinated and wasteful; a problem they themselves have begun to recognize. Thus there is a growing consensus that what is needed is a leadership role to initiate the formation of one unifying and purposeful direction.

While these facts make it increasingly clear that there is a new urgency in Asia and the Pacific that we must pay attention to in order to both realize our opportunity and protect our interests, it is also clear that we are relative latecomers to the field. To name a few examples: Japan set up a foundation ten years ago, Australia set one up seven years ago; the United States has had its Japan Society for over seventy-five years and its Asia Foundation and Asia Society for almost thirty years. Catching up is going to require a substantial amount of energy and concentration, not just on new ways to advance our economic and political interests, but new ways to enlarge our cultural ties as well. Experience has taught us that the intensity of economic and political relations is dependent on cultural ties, that such ties are intricately bound up with right social and historical heritages of which Asian and Pacific societies are justifiably proud, and that these societies expect others to understand and appreciate that fact.

People do business and seek political solutions to regional or global problems with partners in whom they have trust and confidence. Trust only comes when there is the capacity for understanding and appreciation of different systems of thought. Therefore, a Pacific community of nations in which Canada plays a significant part, can only be realized if Canadians on the one side, and Asian and Pacific cultures on the other, know a great deal more about each other.

This need for a looking-glass between different cultures has become particularly urgent at this time, for there is a cultural transformation going on in much of the Asian Pacific region in which a process of rapid modernization is trying to merge with the traditional values. Canadians must understand the complexity of these changes if we are to understand the people who are experiencing them, and we must understand the people who are experiencing them if we wish to have any kind of relationship with them. There may be an unexpected dividend in this exchange. Perhaps the new perspectives we gain from increased contacts with our Asian and Pacific neighbours will illuminate parts of ourselves; we may come to better understand that elusive Canadian identity in both its strengths and weaknesses.

Catching up then is going to require that Canadians act quickly and effectively. The first step must include the development of united long range objectives. Practically speaking, this will entail acquiring the knowledge we need to make these decisions which in turn requires development of a special kind of expertise.

Because of Canada's size and small population, the country's human resources in this area, like its natural resources, are widely spread and require co-ordination to make us more effective. For provinces to do this individually would be a very costly task. An Asia Pacific Foundation, which would be a national organization guided by the most skilled and respected Canadian experts in Asia Pacific affairs from all regions and sectors of our society, could work together to provide an ideal forum. It could produce a long range, unified Canadian approach while at the same time giving full recognition to and reflecting our regional diversity.