

In developing the kind of sophisticated response I am calling for in our approaches, I have just discussed the important role which government has to play. Intergovernmental agreements are often necessary to facilitate co-operation in all fields. But without the interest and initiative of the private sector such government efforts will remain only a basic framework. Happily, in our economic relations with Asia and the Pacific, the private sector is showing the necessary active interest. The work of the Canadian Committee of the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) exemplifies the kind of activity that is succeeding in promoting a more co-ordinated and systematic approach to the region. Their success in organizing this conference with the cooperation of the various bilateral business associations and drawing on acknowledged Canadian academic expertise is worthy of high praise.

Co-operation and consultation between the private sector and government has become an integral and regular feature of Canadian activities in Asia and the Pacific. In relations with Japan, my Department has frequent consultations with and briefings for the Canada-Japan Business Co-operation Committee with the result that the Japanese themselves have remarked favourably on the coherence of Canadian positions. I have already mentioned the Canadian Committee of PBEC in the context of this conference. We have reinforced the practice of very close working relations with them in recent years.

Another area of government cooperation with the private sector -- broadened to include both business and academic communities -- is that of the Pacific Community concept. Consideration of this concept has reached a kind of plateau where all sides are taking stock of the complexity and size of the task which lies ahead. The Canadian Government continues to support this concept and encourage its examination particularly by ASEAN nations. While any organizational development still seems years away, the work being done under private auspices, such as within the international body of PBEC, is very welcome and deserves careful attention.

There have been important strides in the development of federal-provincial co-operation in promoting the growth of our relations with the Pacific. Provincial initiatives are receiving the full support of the Federal Government. We have co-operated closely in providing briefings before visits to the region by provincial premiers and Cabinet ministers and we are being kept up to date on many provincial interests and activities.