



communiqué

N°:
No.: 92

JUNE 1, 1984

ASIA PACIFIC FOUNDATION

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, announced today the introduction into the House of Commons on May 31 of a Bill to establish the Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada. This action symbolizes the Government's recognition of the vital importance of the trans-Pacific dimension of Canadian national interests.

The Bill will give effect to the government's undertaking in the Speech from the Throne last December to facilitate the establishment of an Asia-Pacific Foundation in order to enhance Canada's commitment to its role as a Pacific Rim nation.

The introduction of this Bill is a further stage in enhancing Canada's relationship with a region which was initially highlighted as an area of challenge and opportunity over a decade ago in "Foreign Policy for Canadians". A fundamental objective of the Foundation will be to nourish a greater sense of mutual awareness and understanding between Canada and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

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The Foundation will encourage creative initiatives involving Business and Policy Programmes, Information and Publications, Public Affairs, Cultural Programmes, and Educational and Training Activities. Another dimension of the Foundation's activities will be a reinforcement of Canada's commitment to the North/South dialogue. Its activities will move to strengthen Canadian cooperation with developing and newly industrialized countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

The January 1984 report of the Founding Committee of the Asia-Pacific Foundation (on the possible structure, objectives and activities of a Foundation), chaired by Mr. John Bruk, provided the basis for the Bill. The Committee carried out extensive consultations with provincial governments and canvassed the views of the non-governmental sector, including the private business sector, non-governmental aid organizations and the academic community, with respect to future participation in and support for the Foundation's activities.

The Foundation will be financed by contributions from the federal government, provincial governments and from private business. The initial federal financial commitment to the Foundation, which does not include future specific programme funding once operations are underway, will be a grant of \$5,000,000 over five years with the first disbursement being \$1,000,000 upon proclamation of the Act.