

I am pleased to be here today and to see so many familiar faces. It is always nice to return from Ottawa each Thursday night when the House is sitting, but this weekend is particularly pleasant. The temperature is about 30 degrees warmer here and, most importantly, I can proudly tell my fellow British Columbians that my colleagues and I in the B.C. Liberal Caucus managed to secure a constitutional veto for B.C.!

It is also an honour to speak at a conference that includes distinguished representatives from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan International Co-operation Agency, the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund and from the major Japanese trading houses, all concerned with the common challenge we face in promoting international development. Two weeks ago I had the pleasure of accompanying Prime Minister Chrétien to Osaka, Japan for the successful Leader's Summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation conference. Those of you in this room from Japan should be very proud of the manner in which your country hosted that important meeting. So to return the favour in a small way, I would like to, on behalf of the Government of Canada, say to each of our Japanese guests: Welcome to Canada. Welcome to Vancouver.

At the Summit in Osaka I also had the privilege of announcing that our beautiful city will host the 1997 APEC Summit. Not only will the Summit clearly generate significant economic benefits for the entire city, but it will also put Vancouver on the centre of the map as the gateway to the Asia-Pacific region and its fast-growing markets.

As you are all well aware, Canada and Japan are strong commercial partners: tens of thousands of jobs are derived from the business done between our nations; hundreds of companies on both sides are currently engaged in profitable enterprise, from selling building products and processed food to investing in automobile and resource-based industries.

Canada and Japan are not only good profit centres for each other, we have also become very good friends, and our friendship is increasing and expanding into new areas. For example, development assistance is a major element of the foreign policies of both Canada and Japan, and dialogue on ODA [Official Development Assistance] is now an important element of our bilateral relationship.

In Canada, we are well aware of the important role Japan is now playing in international development. Japan is the world's largest bilateral aid donor, and Canada recognizes that Japan has accepted a leadership role in this important area of international relations.

With regard to the involvement of business in international development, Canada most certainly wants to learn more about the policies and approaches Japan uses to engage the private sector, both Japanese and non-Japanese, in international development, in