

I should pay a special tribute to David Culver who took up this challenge for Canada. As the first Chairman of the CJBCC, he led its development for over a decade until passing the torch to Allen Lambert a year ago.

If Mr. Makita was the pioneer, Mr. Kanao was a worthy successor, and I know I speak for all Canadians present here today when I express our sincere regrets that he was unable to lead the Japanese delegation.

It was in 1986 that the Kanao Mission visited Canada. And we were pleased that Mr. Kanao and his colleagues discovered a new Canada - a Canada open for business; a confident, rapidly maturing society.

Mr. Kanao enthusiastically endorsed our business, manufacturing and technology environment and organized seminars in Japan to promote investment in our country. He is a true friend of Canada, and we regret his absence today. We wish him well.

Now, we look forward to a MITI-sponsored mission later this year, led by Mr. Morohashi. And I am confident, sir, that you and your colleagues will share the optimism with which we here in Canada view our future.

I am confident because the changes in Canada over the last few years were no accident. They have been the direct result of positive and conscious actions in the public and private sectors of Canada. For our part, my colleagues and I in the Government of Canada have moved step-by-step since 1984 to implement a broad range of reforms which encourage private sector investment and innovation. We have followed a clear agenda for economic renewal.

Central to this agenda has been a Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

It was an agreement linked tactically, strategically and substantively to our objective of a more open world economy.

As a matter of tactics, the Agreement helped prevent a rise in protectionism - so damaging to both our countries. And it strengthened our negotiating position in the on-going Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

Strategically, the Agreement secured better access to a world scale market - a response to the problem of size noted over a decade ago by Mr. Makita. And it lowers barriers to trade in value-added products and services - a major obstacle to our development as a value-added economy and as a location for world scale manufacturing facilities.