

Mr. Lambert, Mr. Morohashi, Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to address the distinguished participants at this Canada-Japan Business Cooperation Conference, and to welcome the Japanese Delegation to Canada.

As many of you know, it was sixty years ago that Canada established diplomatic relations with Japan. The completion in Japan of five full cycles of the 12-year oriental calendar is an auspicious anniversary. It is called Kanreki. It is a time to look back and take stock. It is a time of revitalization for the future.

The year 1989 is, therefore, our Kanreki, as I believe it also is for your distinguished Ambassador, His Excellency, Mr. Kitamura. This is indeed a time to prepare ourselves for the future and for the growth and success of our relationship in the 21st Century.

Sixty years ago, in 1929, my country was taking its first measured steps towards independent status. We were a nation whose mythology was shaped by our northern climate, whose history caused us to look east to our founding nations of Britain and France; and whose economy was increasingly linked to our southern neighbour.

While we were a nation from sea to sea, in many ways our backs were turned to the Pacific Ocean.

Much has changed in the sixty years since. And much of the credit for this changed perspective lies with the Canada-Japan Businessmen's Cooperation Council and the Japan-Canada Committee of the Keidanren, which together form the most influential bridge in our bilateral, private sector relationship.

Within such Councils, a number of individuals stand out for their valuable valued contributions. Mr. Makita, the first chairman of the Japan-Canada Economic Committee, was a visionary pioneer. We deeply regret his passing. His impact on our relationship will be long-lasting.

It was in 1976 that Mr. Makita led a delegation to our country. The Makita Mission issued a report which was a watershed event. They saw no great advantage to investment in Canada, citing our labour costs, the frequency of strikes, and the small size of our domestic market.

Our businessmen appreciated this candid and objective feedback and took these views seriously. And one of the results was the formation of the Canada-Japan Business Cooperation Committee in 1977 - a forum for an ongoing private sector dialogue.