

I am pleased to be the first Canadian Minister to speak to the new Canadian Chamber of Commerce here in Tokyo. As many of you know, this is my second official visit to Japan in a year. That is indicative of the great importance that we in Canada attach to Japan and to our relations with this exciting country. It has seemed to me particularly important to come at this time. Japan is a major player on the world scene and a trading partner of the first importance to Canada.

I wanted to discuss with Japanese leaders our views of the critical role that their country is called on to play in these times of economic difficulty in the world. I wanted to discuss this both in its global dimension and in terms of trade relations between Canada and Japan. I wanted to come to Japan, with a group of senior Canadian businessmen, to explore the implications of the recent announcement by the Japanese government of measures to further open up the Japanese market.

Finally, I wanted to explain the serious problems in the Canadian automotive and forest products industries to Japanese government and industry leaders and to outline the role Japan can play to help us resolve these problems, both in the short and long term.

It is my intention today to report to you on the results of our mission. I am delighted to see so many prominent Japanese business and government leaders, and to have as the forum for my remarks this newly-formed Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan, tangible evidence of the strong and growing presence of Canadian business in this country.

Let me begin by spending a few moments talking about the world trading environment. We are now in a period of international recession. Many governments, including our own, are under severe pressure to restrict imports where these imports are seen as contributing to economic difficulties in our respective countries. It is imperative that all of us become particularly sensitive to the stresses and strains on the domestic markets of our major trading partners. If sensitivity is not shown and mutually-satisfactory solutions are not found to alleviate the pressure, there is no question that unilateral restrictive trade measures will be imposed by affected nations. There is a serious danger