

Mr. Yamada, Mr. McKay, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been looking forward to this visit ever since Prime Minister Mulroney's announcement here last May that I would lead a trade and investment mission to Japan.

I am delighted to be meeting once again with the distinguished members of this Chamber of Commerce and of the Canada-Japan Society.

I have enjoyed our previous sessions together, when I was Minister of Finance, and today I would like to share with you a few thoughts on my new responsibilities.

I have come to Japan with 12 senior business representatives from Canada. Joined by six Canadian business representatives based in Japan, they have come with me to promote trade, investment, technology exchange, and tourism between Canada and Japan; to sensitize Canadians to the exciting opportunities for doing business in the different regions of Japan; and to sensitize Japanese to the benefits of alliances with Canadian companies.

This mission should be seen as the most recent in a long series of activities, both government-led and private sector-led, aimed at expanding our bilateral economic relationship.

The Canada-Japan Business Committee and the Japan Canada Economic Committee held their most successful annual joint conference last May in Halifax, thanks in no small measure to the outstanding leadership provided by the co-chairs, Mr. Minoru Kanao of NKK, and Mr. Allen Lambert of Edper Brascan.

Canada's Business Council on National Issues, which sent an important mission to Japan in October last year, presented its mission report to a "Business Summit" held when Prime Minister Mulroney was here in May.

During Prime Minister Mulroney's visit, a forward-looking panel was created to provide advice and recommendations by the end of 1992 to the Prime Ministers of both countries on the enhancement of our bilateral relationship in the economic, political and cultural areas. The "Canada-Japan Forum 2000: Partnership Across the Pacific," consists of eminent Japanese and Canadians from various disciplines, and is co-chaired by Mr. Yoshio Okawara, Deputy Chairman of the Trilateral Commission and Executive Advisor to the Keidanren, and by the Honourable Peter Lougheed, former Premier of the province of Alberta.

Mr. Lougheed has informed me that he and the Canadian members are taking this very seriously; they are committed to putting forth a positive report to enhance not just bilateral economic ties, but also co-operation on global issues of common interest to Japan and Canada.