

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO WELCOME FOREIGN MINISTER HATOYAMA, AMBASSADOR HARA, OTHER JAPANESE GUESTS, THE HONOURABLE DON PHILLIPS, MAYOR BOLRICH AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS.

I BELIEVE IT IS VERY APPROPRIATE THAT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CANADA/JAPAN JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, WHICH FOREIGN MINISTER HATOYAMA AND I OPENED THIS MORNING, IS BEING HELD IN WESTERN CANADA. IN CHOOSING TO HAVE THE MEETING IN VANCOUVER I WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANT AND ACTIVE ROLE WHICH CANADIANS IN THE WESTERN PROVINCES HAVE PLAYED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVERY FACET OF THE PACIFIC DIMENSION OF CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY.

THE CITY OF VANCOUVER ITSELF HAS AN INTEGRAL PLACE IN THE MANY ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS POLICY. IT IS THROUGH VANCOUVER THAT A GREAT DEAL OF THE LARGE AND INCREASING VOLUME OF TRADE BETWEEN CANADA AND ITS PACIFIC PARTNERS FLOWS AND IT IS IN VANCOUVER'S OFFICES AND BOARDROOMS WHERE A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE MADE CONCERNING CANADA'S FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IN THE PACIFIC REGION.

THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST OF COURSE THAT VANCOUVER'S LINKS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE PACIFIC ARE LIMITED ONLY TO TRADE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS. THE STEADY STREAM OF PEOPLE GOING BACK AND FORTH IN BOTH DIRECTIONS HAVE GIVEN THIS CITY A UNIQUE INVOLVEMENT IN AND UNDERSTANDING OF CANADA'S GROWING ROLE IN THE PACIFIC. UNIVERSITIES IN THIS CITY ARE COMMITTED IN A SIGNIFICANT WAY TO ACADEMIC STUDY OF THE REGION. VANCOUVER'S CLOSE CULTURAL TIES WITH THE PACIFIC IN THE ARTS, THEATRE AND EVEN IN CUISINE ALSO ATTEST