

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE WITH YOU IN HONG KONG TODAY. HONG KONG ENJOYS AN ENVIABLE REPUTATION AS A DYNAMIC TRADING CITY. ITS ENERGY, ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND OPENNESS TO THE WORLD PROVIDE LESSONS WHICH A TRADING NATION LIKE CANADA - AND A FREE TRADE MINISTER LIKE MYSELF - CAN LOOK TO WITH ADMIRATION.

IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS HUSTLE AND BUSTLE AND COMMERCE, IT'S GRATIFYING FOR A CANADIAN TRADE MINISTER TO KNOW THAT THE LARGEST CHAPTER OF THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OUTSIDE OF CANADA IS LOCATED HERE - WITH OVER 750 MEMBERS. (IT'S EQUALLY GRATIFYING THAT SO MANY OF YOU HAVE COME TO THE CHAMBER'S LUNCH TODAY TO HEAR A POLITICIAN FROM ANOTHER ISLAND HALF WAY AROUND THE WORLD SPEAK!)

YOUR SISTER ASSOCIATION IN CANADA - THE HONG KONG CANADA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION - ALSO REPRESENTS THE DYNAMISM OF HONG KONG. WITH ITS 11 CHAPTERS AND MORE THAN 3,000 MEMBERS, IT HAS BECOME THE LARGEST BILATERAL ASSOCIATION IN CANADA. I AM PLEASED TO HAVE ANNE MILLS, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ST. JOHN'S CHAPTER ACCOMPANYING ME AS PART OF MY TRADE MISSION TO HONG KONG.

SIX OF CANADA'S PROVINCES HAVE OFFICES IN HONG KONG DEMONSTRATING THEIR COMMITMENT TO INCREASING TRADE AND INVESTMENT BETWEEN THEIR REGION AND THE TERRITORY. (I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT SOME OF THESE PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES ARE HERE WITH US TODAY). SOME 50 CANADIAN COMPANIES HAVE ESTABLISHED OFFICES IN HONG KONG AND ANOTHER 400 ARE REPRESENTED HERE THROUGH AGENTS AND DISTRIBUTORS.