

My colleague, the Minister for International Trade, who represents this city in Parliament and who was born in Shanghai, attaches a naturally high priority to Pacific relations, as does the Prime Minister, who visited Japan, China and Korea in May, following the Economic Summit in Tokyo.

We have been involved with Pacific Economic Cooperation Conferences since the process began in Canberra in 1980. I founded the Canadian National Committee on Pacific Economic Cooperation in October of last year, and many distinguished Canadians from the business, academic and government sectors serve on the Committee. You will understand my pride in the dedication of Eric Trigg and his colleagues and the impressive team of volunteers, in ensuring the success of this Conference. I also commend Mr. Trigg and the Canadian National Committee in heightening the awareness of Pacific Economic Cooperation in Canada.

The degree of interest in Pacific Economic Cooperation has picked up, not only in Canada, but elsewhere in the Pacific, particularly after the excellent meeting organized by Korea last year. It is our view that for Pacific Economic Cooperation to be truly successful, the six nations that comprise ASEAN need to be completely engaged in the process. And I hope the presence of Dr. Subroto at the Head Table this evening, and the presence of delegates from Brunei for the first time, bodes well for the future, as, of course, does the presence of Dr. Thanat Khoman, who has been so instrumental for so long in promoting Asia Pacific Cooperation.

I understand ASEAN concerns that Pacific Economic Cooperation may detract from ASEAN itself. We believe that, rather than detracting from the integrity of ASEAN, the Pacific Economic Cooperation process can complement ASEAN objectives. The task forces on trade policy, fisheries, and investment, provide a unique opportunity to influence the larger Pacific process. Certainly, Canada's commitment to ASEAN will not slacken because of greater Canadian involvement in this process, and I am sure that the same holds true for other national governments. We believe that only with ASEAN's full support, will Pacific Economic Cooperation reach its full potential.

The economic growth of the nations of the Pacific has been remarkable. It can be attributed to the market approach adopted by the majority of countries in the Pacific, and to the political stability of the region. Trade and domestic economic growth cannot flourish in an atmosphere poisoned by conflicts, or stifled by too much government control.