

made. Team Canada showed that we could pursue business opportunities. It demonstrated the advantage of working together: federal government with provincial governments, business with government. And it proved that Canada can compete with the best in the world and win.

I am convinced that our government's focus on the Asia-Pacific – and our explanations to Canadians for that focus – is perhaps the best example to Canadians of our government's Red Book philosophy. In short, exports create jobs, and jobs create wealth for Canadians, thus helping to reduce the deficit and to maintain many of those programs, such as health care, that have made our country the envy of the world.

As the Prime Minister and the nine premiers who joined him demonstrated on the Team Canada trip, our government's commitment to the Asia-Pacific region can also address some of our concerns about national unity. While national unity is most obviously relevant in the Quebec dimension it is also significant in mediating lingering divisions between Eastern and Western Canada. We see our efforts in the Asia-Pacific as a unifying force – something on which we can all agree. Indeed, support for national unity can be enhanced through the pursuit of co-operative working relationships with the provinces, and through federal leverage and access in the Asia-Pacific when key contracts are at stake and major issues must be dealt with.

I cannot even begin to count the number of times I have travelled to Asian countries to meet with heads of state, ministers and business leaders in order to promote and support companies from Quebec who were bidding on contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars. It is an incredible advantage to Quebec companies to be a part of a country that is considered to be a Pacific country by our Asian partners. As Prime Minister Chrétien pointed out last week following a meeting with Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Tok Chong, yet another of the many reasons Quebec needs to remain in Canada is to give Quebec firms like Bombardier better access to the Pacific Rim markets. To quote our Prime Minister: "If Quebec were separate, it would not be a Pacific nation anymore."

This brings me to an important issue I want to discuss with you this evening; the upcoming referendum. Quebecers like yourselves must choose between a country that has already proven successful and the unrealistic option of those who want to break it apart. This is the question you are faced with on October 30th. No matter how it is dressed up, the question is clear: Do Quebecers want to separate from Canada?

And make no mistake about it, the referendum is your business. Canada's multiculturalism policy recognizes that all Canadians are full-fledged members in building a better society and that no one should be excluded from that process. Ensure you are registered to vote. The deadline for registration has not yet passed. Talk to