

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your kind introduction. I am pleased to have been given this opportunity to address the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan. The businessmen here today, both Canadian and Japanese, are the foundation upon which our nations have built our economic partnership. That partnership is solid today, and I am confident that it can and will become even stronger in the future.

I confess that there was one point in my life, many years ago, when I was not as optimistic. It was in the early fifties, and I had a friend who had lived for awhile in Japan and considered himself something of an expert. It was his view, at the time, that Japan was in dire economic straits and could never get out of them. Too few natural resources to support too many people, he said. Absolutely no hope.

Well, he has spent many years eating those words. His only consolation was that he could go to the store and buy plenty of Teriyaki sauce to wash them down with.

I find it particularly appropriate that one of my first overseas visits as a Minister brings me to this land of miracles. The bonds that make Canada and Japan partners across the Pacific are strong. We cooperate in economic, political and commercial affairs. Because Japan is Canada's second largest trading partner, and because it is the country that led the dynamic growth that has been taking place in the Pacific, I'd like to focus on the trade dimension of our relationship as I see it.