

The entree that Hong Kong provides to Asian markets and Asian capital, in fact the unique window Hong Kong provides on the global economy, is indispensable to Canada, including Quebec. In the same way, the entree that organizations like the Canadian Commission in Hong Kong and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong provide to the world of business in Hong Kong is without equal. Their fine work, as well as the facilities and services we offer at headquarters and through our International Trade Centres, are just some of the advantages Quebec business can share with Canada and, indeed, that it does share with Canada. These facts are particularly relevant at this important time in our own nation's history, for it is imperative that Quebecers realize the advantages of being part of Canada with regard to our relationship with the countries of the Asia-Pacific.

A few weeks ago I spoke to the Association des restaurants chinois du Quebec and outlined some of the risks that loom on the horizon in the aftermath of a "Yes" vote: the risk of losing one's citizenship, job and mobility rights. I went into greater detail than I will today. There is another obvious risk that is of particular concern to those of us in this room discussing the importance of Asian trade to our economy. Separating from Canada would mean that Quebec would no longer be part of a Pacific country. Given the growing importance of Asia as we have just discussed, this would be a significant loss.

As an Asia-Pacific country, Canada is active in the region and is a partner at the table of such important organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation [APEC] forum. APEC includes all the major economies of the region, among the most dynamic, fastest growing economies in the world. It is setting the standards for free trade in the region, and Canada is an active participant. Quebec can not afford to miss out on this tremendous opportunity. To do so would diminish the impact Quebec companies will have in the region.

Indeed, Quebec companies are doing well in Hong Kong as part of Team Canada. There are numerous projects in services, high technology, transportation, power generation and infrastructure development where, working together with the leverage that only a Team Canada approach can lend, Quebec firms are winning contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars. In this regard, our outstanding trade staffs in Beijing and Hong Kong are working closely with Mayor Bourque's office here in Montreal to ensure a successful trade mission next month. Mayor Bourque will be leading a business mission of some 30 companies in a number of competitive sectors and I wish them well.

In closing, I am optimistic about the future of Hong Kong. Sure there are some problems ahead – some uncertainties that trouble us – some reason for caution. But the outlook is still good. Hong Kong is still one of Asia-Pacific's most dynamic and enduring success stories.

Growth in 1995 is still expected to be above 5 per cent – a dream for some nations! It's still the freest market in the world, and one of