

On the occasion of the Seventh Canada-Japan Ministerial Meeting, I am very glad to address the Japanese Press Club. The Canadian Delegation that I lead has had very promising discussions with Japanese Ministers and officials, as most of you will have learned from the final communiqué issued yesterday. These discussions enabled us to explain to your Government how we, Canadians, hope to broaden and deepen the relationship between Japan and Canada, as agreed by the then Prime Minister of Japan and Prime Minister Trudeau when they met in Ottawa last September.

What we have in mind is quite ambitious and can certainly not be accomplished by governments alone. It will need the understanding and support of the people of both countries: that is why I was pleased to accept your invitation to speak to you today. In democratic societies, policies can be developed and implemented only with the active participation of all citizens. Citizens must therefore be informed-- and well informed. The news media accordingly perform vital functions: they collect, transmit and analyze information for the benefit of the general public. Canadians often complain that they are misunderstood abroad; but they do not often take the liberty to explain themselves. With your permission, I will try today to explain Canada.

There are many misconceptions and misunderstandings which subsist about our respective countries. Some of them have serious implications, for they involve the perceptions that businessmen, journalists, public servants and politicians have of the economy and society of Japan and Canada. These misconceptions therefore affect the development of bilateral relations; and it is imperative that we correct them if we want to broaden and deepen these relations, as would otherwise be desirable and possible. I deplore, for example, that many Canadians have still not realized what tremendous economic strides Japan has made in the last twenty years and what potential your country represented for Canada as an economic partner. But today, here in Tokyo, I must address myself to the unfortunate misconceptions which also exist in Japan about our country.

Too many of our foreign friends-- even among our closest neighbours-- still hold a stereotyped image of Canada which has been long outdated. Talking to them, we get the impression that these friends look upon Canada as a vast expanse of territory bordered by three oceans, almost empty