

complex markets. Second, we must increase our share of exports of high technology and value-added products.

It is also imperative that we encourage and assist small- and medium-sized businesses to look beyond the United States when they consider exporting abroad. I intend to take a close look at this issue early in our mandate. The objective will be to examine whether we have the right kinds of programs in place to help small- and medium-sized enterprises. I would appreciate the input of the Canada China Trade Council with respect to how we might encourage and assist more Canadian companies to penetrate the Chinese market.

Ladies and gentleman, you know that my government campaigned on the need to create jobs and restore the faith of Canadians in the economy. Those of you here today have already played an important role by being part of an export-led recovery. We all know that exports are our life line and lifeblood. About a quarter of Canadian jobs are directly related to exports. Each new billion dollars of exports generates between 10 000 and 15 000 jobs.

Nowhere are the prospects for expanded trade greater than in the countries of Asia-Pacific. They are growing fast. They represent a much greater trade potential than our traditional partners. If Canadian companies can compete in the Asia-Pacific region, they can compete anywhere in the world. Moreover, Canadian manufacturers and providers of services will acquire products and skills that they can carry into other markets.

I need not remind you that our transpacific trade has long been more important than our trade across the Atlantic -- indeed it is now almost 50 percent greater -- or that the Pacific Rim has become a vital source of new immigrants who have helped to build a stronger Canada. One need look no further than the vibrant city of Vancouver to appreciate the positive impact that Asia-Pacific has had. Indeed, the large number of immigrants from Asia-Pacific who now call the west coast of Canada their home are, I believe, one of Canada's strongest assets in tackling the export markets of Asia-Pacific. With family connections and a first-hand understanding of local languages and culture, these Canadians can play a unique bridging role.

Ladies and gentleman, even a very brief tour of what is happening in Asia-Pacific confirms that the Asia-Pacific region is an important key to Canada's economic future. By any measure, it has an enviable record of economic growth and dynamism. Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, the original little dragons, continue to generate enviable, positive growth rates. Their remarkable success is now being replicated throughout southeast Asia, most notably by Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. With peace in Cambodia, Viet Nam is aggressively restructuring its