

Honoured guests from China, the Honourable Edwin Goodman, ladies and gentlemen. I am very pleased to be with you today to take part in this timely forum, which focuses on Canada's relations with China now and in the years to come.

It was just over one year ago that I led a Canadian business delegation to China, to offer support to the already burgeoning Canadian interest in the China market. The breadth of Canadian expertise represented in the delegation was impressive: agriculture, telecommunications, energy, construction, engineering and architectural services.

It spoke a lot for the wide range of sectors where Canada's experience matches so well with China's current development priorities. I was impressed, as were all the Canadians in our delegation, with the business opportunities that presented themselves -- the result of rapid economic growth and China's new market orientation. We were also impressed with the vitality and openness demonstrated by the people we met. These changes have come about largely as a result of the "open door" policies championed by Deng Xiaoping and by the far-sighted policies being implemented by Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji, who spoke to you this morning.

The rapid pace of change in China means that even the most seasoned China hand who has not visited the country for six months is quite out of date.

The ancient Chinese had a saying: *zo ma gwan hwa*. For those of you who cannot understand my Toronto accent, that means "riding on a horse looking at the flowers." The inference is that you can get a beautiful view from a moving horse, but you are never going to get at those flowers and really enjoy them unless you get off the horse, slow down, and take the time to appreciate the garden.

Many in the audience today are already old China hands. However, for the relative newcomers who have expressed an interest in China by being here today, I hope you will take the time and considerable effort required to get off your horses, develop an even better understanding of China, and pick some of the excellent business opportunities that exist there.

This reminds me of an ancient Canadian saying -- ancient by Canadian standards, that is -- as it was coined by one of my more famous predecessors, George Hees. As Minister for Trade and Commerce, Mr. Hees' formula for export success was simple:

Y-C-D-B-S-O-Y-A

Canadians are far less subtle than the Chinese, and there is no hidden inference here whatsoever. Pure and simple, the formula means "you can't do business sitting on your ass." One can assume that Mr. Hees, like the ancient Chinese, was referring to