

On the Occasion of a Team Canada Business Dinner

September 14, 1999
Osaka, Japan

It is a pleasure to be with you tonight in Osaka.

The Kansai region is the heartland of the economy and history of Japan. A Japanese gateway to the world. And, I believe, a gateway that shows the way to the future for the friendship between Japan and Canada.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of Japan. You are the second largest economy in the world. The largest creditor nation. The largest donor of aid. A nation that has set global standards for high tech innovation. The decisions and choices you make in Japan have ripple effects that are felt around the world. From East Asia to Canada.

That is why Team Canada '99 is here. To show the world that Canada cares about the Kansai and Japan.

Japan is by far our largest trading partner in Asia. And the Kansai is especially important to the Canadians who are with me today. It is a \$2.2 billion market for Canada. And over 60 firms from the Kansai have a presence in our country. I know that many of you in the room this evening are working to foster closer business ties through the Kansai-Canada West Business Forum.

Team Canada '99 is about building on your effort. It is the largest Canadian trade mission ever to come to Japan. My team mates include premiers from eight of the ten Canadian provinces and our three territories. And 300 of our finest business men and women. Many are CEO's of the largest companies in Canada.

From diverse backgrounds, we are united by the conviction that we must work together -- as a people -- to build new prosperity and an even better quality of life for Canada in the global economy of the 21st century. And by the belief that Japan offers many exciting opportunities for new kinds of partnerships that will benefit both of our peoples.

Team Canada seeks to highlight Canadian know how and expertise in eight key sectors: space, electric power and energy, food biotechnology, health, information and communication technologies, building products, environment and education. And we seek to open a new window, for our firms, on the vibrant nature and potential of regional markets outside of Tokyo.

In choosing to come here, Team Canada '99 is also a vote of confidence in Japan. This is challenging time for your country. As you go through this period, Canada will not be just a valued business partner but a steadfast friend. And I hope that the size and quality of our team makes this crystal clear.

Tonight, I would like to talk to you about some of our common interests and our common future.

Like all nations, we are dealing with sweeping, global transformations. Of technology, of trade and of competition. Our common challenge is to master these changes, not be swept along by them.

In our own unique way, Canada has adapted to domestic and international change. Our federal and provincial governments have redesigned their respective roles in the national economy. And our companies have changed the way they do business.

This has not always been easy. But it has paid off where it counts most: in a competitive and vibrant Canadian economy. One that is primed to face the challenges of the new century.

How did we achieve this?

First, we got our public finances in order. Deficits have been replaced by balanced budgets. And government spending has been refocused. Targeted, in a balanced way, where it can yield the most profound social and economic benefit. To boost knowledge and innovation, enhance health care, fight child poverty, cut taxes, and reduce our public debt.

For their part, Canadian businesses have restructured and become more export oriented.

The results are clear. Unemployment and interest rates are down. Exports are running at a record pace. Canadian companies now look at international trade as an opportunity, not a threat.

Above all, Canada has successfully adapted to globalization without sacrificing our cherished quality of life. One of our proudest achievements as a people, is that for the last six years in a row, even as we have experienced this period of profound change, we have been ranked by the United Nations as the best country in the world in which to live.

Japan now faces a time of similar transition. Overcoming fundamental challenges is nothing new to the Japanese people. And I have no doubt that you will find your own unique path to renewed prosperity. That Japan will emerge a stronger country and society.

I also believe that Canada and Japan make a good fit as partners. High technology and environmental technologies are two key areas of a new strategic relationship.

To the Japanese mind, Canada conjures up images of a vast land of endless natural beauty. And we are, indeed, proud of our stunning natural heritage. Tonight, I want to show you a rapidly emerging feature of our reality. One that co-exists with established economic strengths and traditional values. That of advanced technology.

Canada leads the world in telecommunications, computer software and space exploration. Canadian software is now being used by Japanese car makers, to make Japanese computer games and to make semiconductor chips here.

Some of our technology is so advanced that it is, in a very real sense "out of this world." For many years, NASA has used the famous Canadarm to perform essential experiments and activities in orbit. And the second generation of the arm, will be an indispensable component on the new international space station.

Many Canadian high tech firms have developed important markets and partnerships in this country by tailoring unique Canadian products to Japanese needs.

For example, a Canadian firm has developed a close working relationship with NEC in which Canadian software and its own hardware have been combined to create a new sales and marketing program.

And less than one year after establishing a presence in Japan, a Canadian company has captured an astonishing 80% of your market for electronic forms.

Canada is also at the cutting edge of health care innovation and technology. Our firms have developed new treatments and procedures that can revolutionize patient care. For instance, a Vancouver firm is working with a Japanese partner to bring the benefits of a new kind of cancer therapy to Japanese patients. One that does not require the patient to be hospitalized. And the

most advanced brain scanner in the world, developed by another firm from British Columbia, is now being used by Osaka University.

These are just a few examples of our expanding high tech partnership. Japanese and Canadian firms are forming strategic alliances in fuel cells, pollution-free waste disposal and global positioning systems. They have learned that shared product development is a key to enhancing their global reach.

Another area in which we have a mutual interest is investment.

From the Atlantic to the Pacific, Japanese investment in Canada has created jobs and economic opportunity for Canadians. More, the construction by Japanese firms of state of the art factories in Canada also serves to transfer leading edge technologies that keep Canada competitive on a global scale.

Japanese investors grasp the incredible opportunities that Canada offers. From access to the NAFTA market of 400 million people, to a skilled labour force, to safe communities and excellent schools, to the lowest costs of doing business in the G-7.

But investment is a two way street. And recently some major Canadian companies have identified new opportunities to invest in Japan. Manulife Financial has entered into a billion-dollar partnership with Daihyaku Life Insurance. This bold and visionary investment is the largest ever by a Canadian firm in Japan. And it has transformed the nature of our financial services relationship.

From high tech product development to investment, new frontiers in the Canada - Japan relationship are opening before our very eyes. Many of the pioneers are in this room today. Team Canada '99 is about pushing the frontiers even further. About encouraging you to "**Think Canada.**" And encouraging Canadians to "**Think Japan.**"

Ladies and gentlemen, the 1990s have proven that change is the only constant in the new global economy. Rapid change. In the coming century the capacity to adapt swiftly to the challenge of change will be what sets nations apart. What determines their standard of living and their quality of life.

With me here today are some of the finest men and women. From business, NGOs, universities and municipalities. We want to be your partners. To work with you to bring about a new era of growth and prosperity in Japan.

We are Team Canada.