

## Message from Consul-General Takako Ito

November 2018

In October, there were two significant developments relating to legislation in Canada.

First, the recreational use of cannabis was legalized in Canada on Oct. 17. The bill had been approved on June 21, and, after each province made specific preparations for it coming into effect, the prohibition on cannabis was officially lifted on October 17.

However, we would like Japanese nationals who are in Canada to fully understand that parts of Japan's Cannabis Control Act may still apply to Japanese nationals outside Japan, and that the possession and transactions of cannabis (including purchase) etc. are subject to penalties stipulated in Japan's Criminal Code.

The purposes of legalizing cannabis in Canada include prevention of its use by minors and barring benefits of illegal sales by criminals by strictly controlling the production, distribution, sale and possession of cannabis. Canadians attempting to take cannabis out of the country or selling it to minors (under 19 in Ontario, but age restrictions vary according to each province) are still subject to severe punishments.

In addition, a great deal of concern still remains across Canada regarding the health risks and adverse social effects of cannabis. There are reports that deaths from traffic accidents in this country now occur more under the influence of drugs than of alcohol. Canadian health officials are also often raising concerns relating to the physical and psychological effects of long-term and extensive cannabis use. Against this backdrop, some Canadian municipalities have declared themselves "cannabis free" and do not allow the use of cannabis at public spaces. Markham, which is a city neighboring Toronto, has already issued such a declaration. Condominium owners have also put rules in place to prohibit the use of cannabis on their properties in order to keep their value from decreasing.

I would like the Japanese nationals in Canada to fully understand the situation I have described above, and pay extra caution to avoid becoming involved in criminal cases related to cannabis. To the Japanese residing in Canada or are about to visit, I would like to unequivocally convey the message: "No. Absolutely not."

Secondly, the Parliament of Canada passed a bill on Oct. 25 which allows to make necessary domestic measures in order to ratify the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). By subsequently submitting the instrument of ratification to New Zealand, the CPTPP's Depository, Canada became the fifth among the 11 signatory countries to ratify the agreement. Australia also completed the ratification procedures the following week, which meant the condition of the six countries (Japan, Mexico, Singapore, New Zealand, Canada, Australia) required for the agreement to enter into force was satisfied. The CPTPP will therefore enter into force on December 30 this year.



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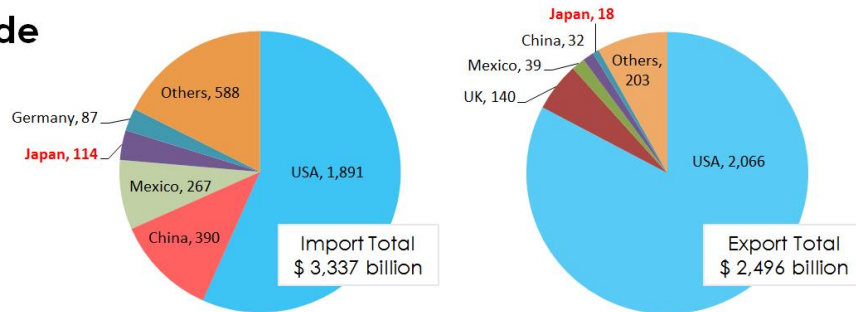
The CPTPP holds great significance as it establishes a free trade area in the Asia-Pacific region that is open at a high standard. Japan and Canada are respectively the largest and second largest economies among the 11 signatory countries. That we are among the first to put the agreement to effect and enjoy its benefits will also contribute to the expansion of bilateral trade and investment relations between our countries.

Negotiations on revising the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) also concluded at the end of September, albeit after encountering several difficulties. Due to this experience, among Canadians and especially in Ontario, over 80% of whose total exports go to the United States, there have been voices raised among politicians, business leaders and intellectuals who say early ratification of the CPTPP is of immense importance for diversifying Canada's current trade structure and limiting its dependency on the US. I also heard time and again how it was vital that Canada's economic partnership relations with Japan be strengthened. For Japan as well, although we do not have a bilateral economic partnership agreement with Canada, that there is now a multilateral agreement among five countries which includes Canada is certain to serve as a strong foundation for further strengthening economic ties between our countries.

Trade of goods between Japan and Canada is mainly comprised of major Canadian exports to Japan – agricultural products and mineral resources such as rapeseed oil, pork, copper, coal, etc.

## Ontario-Japan Economic Relations

### ●Trade



– and such Japanese exports as automobiles, automobile parts, machinery, etc. to Canada. Given the current popularity of Japanese cuisine in Canada, I also hope more of Japan's superb agricultural and fisheries products, as well as sake and whiskey will come here. I also hope there will be many brand products, as well as IT and high tech products, exported to Japan from Canada, particularly those not yet well-known in Japan. Such developments will certainly enrich the lives of citizens of both countries.

The CPTPP is also not limited to the trade of goods, but aims to strengthen ties pertaining to a wide range of economic activities. The various possibilities include faster and simpler procedures for acquiring visas for Japanese who plan to conduct a business, as well as Japanese companies participating in Canadian government procurements and much more.

Japan and Canada are constantly working together for a free and open world economy as members of various forums such as the WTO, OECD, APEC, G7 and G20. By adding the CPTPP to this list, we can send a strong message that the free and fair new rules of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been established and being permeating. I hope that the boundaries of bilateral cooperation will be expanded, and that our economic relationship will be greatly bolstered as a result.