

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL SASAYAMA TAKUYA

January 2021

We are now in the last week of January in the New Year.

Regretfully, in reaction to the increase in new COVID-19 infections, a state of emergency was once again declared in Ontario on Jan. 14 with a Stay-at-Home Order issued for the first time. Safety measures have grown increasingly stringent since last October and are now stricter than ever. As of this writing (Jan. 28), new infections are finally showing signs of decline, but restricted lifestyles continue for everyone in Ontario. Please take a moment to assess your surroundings and vigilantly continue to follow safety protocols to protect yourselves.

Even under the shadow of the Novel Coronavirus, I had the privilege of meeting many outstanding individuals online – now the preferred method of communication.

- The Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Ontario's Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction
Associate Minister Sarkaria and I were able to have a frank discussion on the local business environment for Japanese companies and on the economic measures taken in reaction to the pandemic.
- The Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Ontario Minister of Transportation and the Hon. Kinga Surma, Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA)
I met with Minister Mulroney and Associate Minister Surma and exchanged views on such matters as the participation by Japanese companies in developing infrastructure in Ontario. They commented that Ontario supports the idea of TOD (Transit Oriented Development) advocated by Japan and is trying concretely to implement it in the province's infrastructure.



- Mr. Ehren Cory, CEO of the Canada Infrastructure Bank,
With Mr. Cory, who has just recently assumed his position, I was able to exchange opinions on such matters as the participation of Japanese companies in efficient construction of infrastructure in Canada and Ontario.
- Mr. Arif Virani, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada (Member of Federal Parliament)
High Park, which is famous for the Sakura (Japanese flowering cherry) trees donated by Japanese and Japanese Canadians, is located in Mr. Virani's constituency. He and I discussed such matters as further developing Japan-Canada relations.



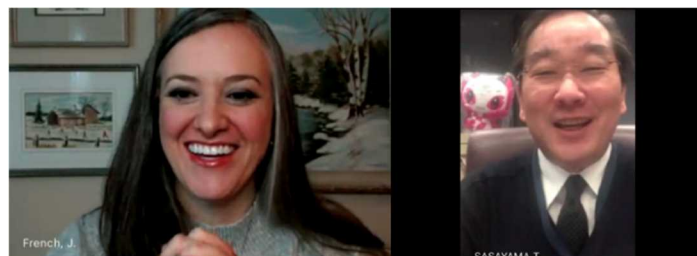
- Mr. Adam van Koeverden, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth and to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Sport) (Member of Federal Parliament)
Mr. van Koeverden is a former Olympian who represented Canada in canoe/kayak at four consecutive Olympic Games starting from 2004. He is a winner of one gold, two silver, and one bronze medals. He and I exchanged views on such matters as the current situations in Japan and Canada in relation to the pandemic and ways to further develop Japan-Canada relations, including this summer's Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.



- Mr. Michael Coteau, Member of Provincial Parliament
Mr. Coteau, whose constituency is where the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre is located, discussed with me ways of further developing Japan-Ontario relations, starting with planting more Sakura trees.



- Ms. Jennifer French, Member of Provincial Parliament
Ms. French, a former participant on the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme who lived in Iwatsuki City in Saitama Prefecture, showed me her handcrafted traditional *kimekomi* doll.



- Ms. Mitzie Hunter, Member of Provincial Parliament
The Momiji Health Care Society, an elderly support home operated by Japanese Canadians, is located in Ms. Hunter's constituency. She and I discussed such matters as the various exchanges taking place between Japan and Ontario.



- Mr. Rocco Rossi, President and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Rossi and I discussed supporting Ontario business that are facing difficult challenges during the pandemic, as well as strengthening Japan-Ontario economic relations.

We also started a new social media campaign on Jan. 22 entitled “The Animals of Ontario”.

Generally, we will be posting every Friday around noon. Please enjoy it as a way of easing the stresses of the week before the weekend. As well, we are currently planning future campaigns showing visits to Japanese business and introducing Japanese cuisine.



SASAYAMA Takuya
Consul-General of Japan