

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL SASAYAMA TAKUYA

July 2021

Ontario entered Step 3 of its Roadmap to Reopen five days ahead of schedule. For the first time in many months, friends and acquaintances are able to gather indoors at restaurants and elsewhere, even though some restrictions still apply. This, along with favourable summer weather, has brightened the mood among communities considerably. Having said that, issues such as viral variants and border measures still remain. It seems we cannot say quite yet that we are over with the COVID-19 pandemic. Even those who have been vaccinated need to take necessary measures to protect others. The Consulate-General of Japan will also continue to disseminate relevant information in a timely manner.

The Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games have finally commenced after a year's delay amidst various challenges. Before the opening, I had opportunity to hold pertinent meetings with the following people. While reporting on the latest developments, I took the opportunity to express my hope that Canadian athletes will be able to compete under optimum conditions and to wish them the best of luck:

Adam van Koeverden, MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth and to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Sport)



Mr. van Koeverden himself has competed in seven Olympic Games and has won four Olympic Medals. He shared interesting stories told from the perspective of an athlete and stakeholder.

David Shoemaker

CEO and Secretary General, Canadian Olympic Committee



Having sent many competitors off to Japan already, Mr. Shoemaker met with me at a time when he himself was about to depart with the Canadian team. I understand 371 Canadian athletes have gathered in Japan, not only from Canada but from elsewhere in the world depending on their sport. They are top athletes who have passed the qualifying rounds and who reflect the high standards Canada has achieved.



On July 20, I also had an opportunity to meet with the Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, and provide him with the latest information pertaining to the Olympics. I would like to report on our meeting at a later opportunity.

The 371 Canadian athletes gathered in Tokyo comprise the largest team Canada has sent to the Olympics since Los Angeles. In the popular Japanese television drama *Dragon Sakura 2*, there is a scene in which a father points out to his daughter that, although entrance exams to Tokyo University are held once a year, the Olympics is a rare opportunity that only takes place once every four years. We can say Olympic athletes and staff are contained in a bubble. As well, countless people around the world have watched the Olympic and Paralympic Games on television, but only a small portion of them have actually cheered the athletes on in person. How to widely share the excitement of the Games and the marvels of competition has always been a topic of discussion. This year's opening took place during a

pandemic, but I hope it will bring forth a new Olympics – with new ways of taking in the competition and new ways of sharing the excitement. As well, while Canadian stakeholders repeatedly pointed out to me the sheer size of this year's Canadian team, I in turn forewarned them that they would be greeted in Japan by a team of formidable Japanese athletes.

SASAYAMA Takuya
Consul-General of Japan