

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL SASAYAMA TAKUYA

March 2023

We are now into March and eagerly anticipating spring. This is a time of seasons turning and typically the end of the fiscal year and the school semester in Japan. Many annual events were held here in Toronto as well, and I was pleased to be able to participate. A total of 69 students graduated from kindergarten, elementary and junior high school at The Japanese School of Toronto Shokokai. (Shokokai refers to the Toronto Japanese Association of Commerce & Industry.) The Japanese Canadian Culture Centre held its Spring Festival and announced many of its activities. I was treated to a lot of fun at the Japan Bowl, the annual Japanese language and culture competition for high school students. The Ontario Japanese Speech Contest was followed by the National Contest being held this year in Toronto.



JCCC Spring Festival



Japan Bowl



Canadian National Japanese Speech Contest



Japanese School Graduation

1. Visit to Toronto by the Battery Association for Supply Chain (BASC)

When Japanese Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio visited Ottawa in January, it was announced that a Japanese business mission focusing on EV battery manufacturing would subsequently visit Canada. In March, over 50 representatives of 16 Japanese companies visited Toronto and Montreal. They held lively discussions at a seminar in Toronto with officials from the governments of Canada and Ontario. Ontario has already announced battery-related investments by American, European and Korean companies. Meanwhile, APMA (Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association) Canada displayed its own electric vehicle made in Ontario at the Canadian International AutoShow in Toronto. This car was named Arrow after the famous aircraft once made in Canada. Rich mineral resources as well as high-tech manufacturing capabilities already exist in Ontario, and bringing in new capital and technology will surely make the province a promising manufacturing base.



BASC Seminar



BASC dinner

2. Visit to Toronto by Hachioji Higashi High School (Toronto Research Program)

COVID-19 brought various in-person exchanges to a standstill, and I think visits to foreign countries by high school students must also have been affected. However, some exchanges that had been organized prior to the pandemic resumed this year. This includes Hachioji Higashi High School's visit to Toronto, a three-year plan that was finally realized in March, allowing me to meet the students and their teachers.

I had given online lectures on Toronto and Canada for the students three times in the past. Each Hachioji Higashi High School student had their own interests and conducted their own individual research. The weather in Toronto was still cold compared to Tokyo, but I think it was a meaningful visit nonetheless.



With students and staff from Hachioji Higashi High School

3. Visiting Windsor

Windsor is the southernmost city in Ontario, lying just across the river from Detroit. It is also the home of Canadian Club whiskey and the first location outside the US where Ford Motors established a manufacturing plant.

Windsor is a sister city of Fujisawa in Kanagawa Prefecture. We visited Jackson Park, where the City of Fujisawa had planted Sakura trees as a symbol of friendship and where there is even a garden named after Fujisawa. We were shown around by Windsor City Councillor Angelo Marignani, who once lived in Japan for eight years. The garden and trees are well managed by the City, and beautiful blossoms are certain to bloom again this year.

Recent news in Windsor the announcement of an investment by Stellantis and LG Energy Solution in an automotive battery plant. Construction was already underway in an industrial zone provided by the city. We paid a courtesy call on His Worship Drew Dilkens, Mayor of Windsor, who kindly spoke to us about the city's history and future development. The battery plant is expected to create nearly 100,000 jobs. Windsor is the hub of Canadian manufacturing, and this visit gave me a sense of its potential growth.



Jackson Park visit



Stellantis Construction Site



With Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens

4. Mr. SATO Kota, Second Soloist, National Ballet of Canada

Mr. Sato decided at a young age that he wanted to master his beloved ballet while attending school in Canada, which made him eventually set foot in Toronto. By the time he was 15, he was living in the National Ballet of Canada's dormitory while going to school and starting ballet again from the basics. He is now a Second Soloist with the National Ballet and at times takes the stage in feature roles. He kindly

attended our National Day Reception in February after a day of practicing, and I had an opportunity of speaking with him at a later date. During our conversation, his passion for ballet and for Japan came through clearly in his demeanour. The National Ballet of Canada currently has five soloists from Japan on its roster, including Mr. Sato. I also understand there are still many young Japanese who wish to practice ballet while living in the National Ballet's dormitory.

Ballet in Canada is apparently among the best in the world. In the arts, Maestro OZAWA Seiji took the baton for the first time overseas as the conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. I would like to do my best to introduce you to as many Japanese artists active in Toronto.



With Mr. SATO Kota of the National Ballet of Canada

5. Visiting Erie AP and Kubota Materials

(1) Erie AP

There have been great advancements in building materials, and we are in a time when custom-made products emphasizing transparency and energy efficiency are in demand. During my trip to Windsor, I visited Erie AP, which makes such products. At the end of 2019, the YKK AP Group (*) acquired Erie AP, a family-owned company originally founded in the suburbs of Windsor. They now supply exterior building materials – specifically, unit curtain walls (**)-- designed and manufactured in Canada for the U.S. market, and widely used in airports and other urban landmark buildings. I felt this was an example of a Japanese company utilizing Japanese capital with local technology and Canada's advantageous proximity to the US.

(*) YKK stands for Yoshida Kōgyō Kabushiki Gaisha ("Yoshida Manufacturing Corporation") with Yoshida being the name of the founder. AP stands for Architectural Products.

(**) A unit curtain wall is an exterior building material (curtain wall) that is made into a unit by integrating glass into an aluminum frame at the factory. This ensures quality and improves on-site safety. It also shortens the construction period and saves labour.



At Erie AP

(2) Kubota Materials Canada

In my October 2022 message, I reported on the opening ceremony of Kubota's new Pickering headquarters. This month, I visited Kubota Materials Canada (KMC) in Orillia, which inherited metal casting technology from when Kubota was first established. The core of their products is casting steel – in particular, manufacturing casting coils for pyrolysis furnaces that refine ethylene. The main raw material for various plastic products we use every day is produced from this machinery. Due to the specific requirements placed on the product, almost every production is designed to order. For this reason, each order requires nearly a year to deliver. They also produce raw materials for brake pads, which are essential for automobiles. Indeed, your car's brakes would not work if not for this product.

In 1990, it acquired what was originally a Canadian company which produced castings for mining equipment in Ontario and has continued to develop since then. Japan's casting technology goes back to the time of Nara's Great Buddha. KMC uses Japanese technology and such resources in Ontario as nickel to manufacture products that are of great service to society. This is a fine example of the fusion between Canadian resources and Japanese technology and reflects Ontario manufacturing in modern times.



At Kubota Materials Canada