

Remarks for Ambassador Ishikane
Enthronement Reception, May 2019

(The Honourable George Furey, the Speaker of the Senate,)

Justice of the Supreme Court, Senators and Members of Parliament,
Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this reception. I would like to begin by thanking all of you for joining us today to celebrate the enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor, as well as the start of a new era in Japan.

In Japan, the accession of a new Emperor to the throne marks the beginning of a new era. Reiwa, the name of this new era, decided by the Cabinet, means “Beautiful Harmony” in English.

Le nom de cette nouvelle ère trouve sa source dans une œuvre littéraire, la plus ancienne anthologie poétique du Japon, compilée il y a plus de 1 200 ans. L’idée derrière Reiwa, « belle harmonie », est que la culture naît et s’épanouit grâce aux gens qui échangent dans une belle harmonie.

The Japanese imperial family has a long history. Today, we celebrate the ascension of the 126th Emperor to the Chrysanthemum Throne. In his remarks delivered on the occasion of his enthronement, His Majesty the Emperor swore to fulfill his responsibility as the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people of Japan as per the Constitution.

Sa majesté l'Empereur a fêté ses 59 ans le 23 février dernier. Avant son intronisation le premier mai, il était prince héritier depuis 1991. Sa majesté l'Impératrice, quant à elle, a travaillé pour le Ministère des affaires étrangères et a passé plusieurs années à l'étranger avant leur mariage en 1993.

The celebrations in honour of the new Emperor will continue this year with the Enthronement Ceremony and Court Dinner set to be held on October 22. The next day, Prime Minister Abe and the First Lady will hold a celebratory dinner to which foreign guests, including a representative of Canada, will be invited.

Both Japan and Canada are constitutional monarchies and many connections exist between the Japanese imperial family and Canada. The Emperor Emeritus has always had a warm relation with this nation. He first visited Canada as a Crown Prince in 1953. It was his first official trip overseas. He visited again in 2009, this time accompanied by the Empress, to promote friendly relations between our two countries. The new Emperor visited Vancouver as Crown Prince in 2006 on his way back from Mexico where he attended the 4th World Water Forum.

On this legacy of warm relations, we wish to further tighten our ties under the new era. The former period, Heisei, started in 1989 near the end of the Cold War. Since then, we have gone through many economic, political and security challenges. We have not yet found the equilibrium for all of us to live peacefully and in prosperity. The new era, Reiwa, begins at a time when the interests of Canada and Japan have never been so closely aligned, sharing the same values,

facing similar challenges and seeing that what we do counts in the world. I sincerely hope that the enhanced collaborations and continued exchanges will contribute to build a world where people can live in the beautiful harmony which the name of the new era, Reiwa, suggests.

Once again, I thank you for joining us tonight to celebrate this important moment in Japanese history.

I hope that you have a pleasant evening. Thank you.