

Parliament Event - Japanese Businesses and the UK's Future Economy

18.45 – 20.45, 31st October 2018

Attlee Suite, Portcullis House

Speech transcript – H.E. Mr Koji Tsuruoka, Ambassador of Japan

Thank you all very much for coming. I know it is a busy time, and we are very honoured today to have the Foreign Secretary with us, who will be speaking to you, and therefore I should not be standing in the way. But I just want to say we are very honoured to have him present here on this fourth annual event, which is very important for not just Japanese investors but I hope it is an important event for the MPs in Westminster. That is why we are grateful to Roger Godsiff for sponsoring us to use the room, because it is accessible and we are expecting many more parliamentarians and MPs to join us maybe sometime later. We have Secretary Grayling also attending – thank you very much, this is a great honour, and we expect other Secretaries also to drop by during the course of this evening.

Now, I will just say three things. First, Jeremy is a very good friend of mine. He's been associated with Japan for a number of years, and I will just ask him today to speak in English. He could very well deliver his remarks in Japanese, which he did when he was in Japan, and he's totally fluent. Two more things: One, the Japanese companies here, they have been here for quite some time, as you may very well know, some of them more than a hundred years but many of them over the last 40 years or so. And, I'd like to say that they have enjoyed being in the UK. They have been successful and they want to continue to be here.

Second, what they are interested in doing is to create a relationship with the community where they operate because people are important, and they value the quality of the labour available in the UK so they invest in the UK. And there are many more companies that are moving their Japanese staff out and replacing them with British people. In fact, those companies may have a Japanese name somewhere in their title but they are purely British, so please welcome them and then they can show that they will continue their successful operations.

So with that, I'd like to ask my very good friend Jeremy to give his remarkable speech in English this time. I'm sure that everybody on the Japanese side will understand, because without English no business can operate here in the UK – and not just the UK, but also globally. The Secretary of Wales has also joined us – thank you very much, Alan, for joining us – and Wales is also an important destination for Japanese investment. Our relationship is not just limited to London or England, it is expanding throughout the UK, and we have many representatives from around the UK with the Japanese businesses here. So please enjoy the evening and thank you very much, Jeremy.