

APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPT OF REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN G. DIFENBAKER, AT THE INSTALLATION OF HIS EXCELLENCY, MAJOR GENERAL GEORGES P. VANIER, AS GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA, THE SENATE CHAMBER, SEPTEMBER 15, 1959

Your Excellency:

It is my privilege as Prime Minister to extend to you with pleasure and pride, on behalf of the government and people of Canada, best wishes as you assume office as Her Majesty's representative in Canada, the nineteenth governor general since confederation.

May I suggest to you, sir, that your first act be to express to Her Majesty, the Queen of Canada, the heartfelt fidelity, devotion and loyalty of the Canadian people, the evidence of which was so apparent during the recent visit of Her Majesty and Prince Philip to Canada.

Votre Excellence,

Ce m'est un privilège agréable et une source de fierté comme premier ministre de vous exprimer au nom du gouvernement et du peuple canadien des vœux sincères au moment même où vous assumez les responsabilités de représentant de Sa Majesté au Canada pour devenir le dix-neuvième Gouverneur général depuis la Confédération.

Comme votre premier geste, puis-je vous demander de transmettre à Sa Majesté la Reine du Canada l'assurance des plus fidèles et loyaux sentiments et du dévouement de la population canadienne, sentiments qui se sont d'ailleurs manifestés de façon si évidente lors de la visite mémorable de la Reine et du prince Philippe il y a à peine quelques semaines.

Les cérémonies d'aujourd'hui marquent un nouveau jalon et un nouveau progrès vers l'unité. Ces cérémonies soulignent l'unité essentielle, sans considération de race ou de croyance, non seulement des races qui ont fondé notre pays, mais de tous les Canadiens quelle que soit leur origine ou leur croyance religieuse.

This ceremony today marks another milestone in Canadian history and emphasizes the essential unity, without regard to race or creed, not only of the founding races, but also of the many other peoples who have come to our country.

I would like to say a word, too, about your gracious wife, Madame Vanier, whose devotion has meant so much, and whose grace is known to all of us.

As we meet here today, a meeting is taking place in Washington, D.C. the outcome of

which causes mankind to build its hopes for new understanding, leading to the attainment of world peace with justice. Canadians have a message for mankind. We have been able to achieve national peace and well-being in Canada without regard to race because of our adherence to the traditions and the tried institutions of freedom, and the spiritual things without which nations no less than individuals cannot achieve greatness.

As we meet today and as one looks back in the retrospect of two centuries, one sees something of the great statesmanship and the wisdom of Great Britain. By the Quebec Act of 1775 she granted religious freedom to Canada—incidentally Your Excellency, the first time this was achieved among the countries now joined in the present commonwealth of nations—and as a result of that act she mobilized the hearts and devotion of French Canadians to the crown and thereby contributed in such large measure to the maintenance and preservation of the crown, and provided for your opportunity to serve as her representative.

I think today of the tremendous developments that have taken place in our institutions, from Governor de Vaudreuil to you, sir. Our system of government, developed to meet the changing needs of a new country were graphically described by Sir Robert Borden when accepting the Speaker's chair from Westminster in 1921, epitomizing by his words the contribution of the French and the English to the building of our country. Sir Robert said:

The parliamentary institutions which we hold as of right and not of grace were won by a common ancestry and through gradual evolution and development during the past five or six centuries. The man who summoned the first gathering that might be regarded as the forerunner of the commons house of parliament... was a Frenchman, born in France. Thus we can look back with satisfaction upon the fact that Saxon and Norman five or six hundred years ago stood side by side in the assertion of liberties that are ours today.

Out of the co-operation of the two founding races came responsible government and the development of the federal system. It also made possible the unity of different races and religions in varying geographical areas, not only in our own country but also as a basic foundation of the commonwealth of nations.