

Mr. President, Mr. Ambassador, Delegates:

Let me first tell you how pleased I am to be here today. In your midst I feel very much at home and among friends. How pleased I am also to be able to perpetuate and to solidify the privileged relationship that has always existed between our countries.

For your thirty-third Congress you have chosen to meet in Caen, this city that is the subject of a page in the history of both our countries. And yet the trying but glorious hours of the Second World War are not the only witnesses of this relationship that I spoke about.

The relationship between Canada and France is very much a present reality. You all know that Prime Minister Trudeau paid an official visit to France last November. Having accompanied him on that occasion, I can tell you that he was very moved by the warm, personal welcome that he received. This visit, motivated by friendship, was a time not only to review everything that has united us in the distant and recent past, but also, and perhaps most significantly, to prepare for the future, because although the friendship between our countries is an established fact, effective cooperation must be the subject of perpetual reflection and renewal. In political and economic terms, France is first and foremost a European country, and Canada a North American one. For some years now our common desire for rapprochement has enabled us to carry out many important projects. French companies have expanded to Canada and have prospered. For example, the Montreal subway was built by Canadians and French working together. Over the years, thousands of young Canadians have studied in France, and vice-versa.

Today our projects of economic cooperation are equal to the challenges of the times. I am thinking especially of the Airbus project and the Arctic pilot project. I could also refer to joint projects in the fields of space and oceanography, or to our major projects in the new and promising area of communications. Three Canada-France cooperation agreements in