

The challenge of commercial and economic relations between France and Canada is quite simply one of will and imagination. That is why I call on you as businessmen and industrial leaders. Because governments will really only be able to give that extra political push to projects when you yourselves get them going in the first place by establishing contacts and lasting — not occasional — co-operation.

**Time to act
is now**

Now is the time to act: now, when the state of the world forces us to look at ourselves and reflect on the future; now, when the Canadian and French governments both seek closer links; now, when the United States is pausing to catch its breath.

The best minds have understood that it is in the interest of Europe that the internal balance of North America be maintained. They know that Canada can open America to France. This is why the future of Canada cannot be a matter of indifference for Europe or France.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, America entered the European consciousness as the fabled promised land. From Rousseau's noble savage to Châteaubriand's Atala, the New World seemed like the rediscovery of paradise on earth. When I call for more solid links between Canada and Europe, when I say that it is time to start a new chapter in the story of loyalty, affection and daring shared by Canada and France, I am not trying to create another mythology.

The time of myths has come and gone. Today we face a harsh reality. But beyond this reality is the future, and it is up to us to shape it to our own advantage. I count on French and Canadian businessmen in the coming years to undertake together economic ventures that will rival in boldness and imagination the greatest exploits in the common history of our two countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, France and Canada are counting on you.