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PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S VISIT TO OTTAWA,
NOVEMBER 13-14, 1953

Introduction

Prime Minister St. Laurent's congratulatory letter of January 20, 1953 to President Eisenhower when he assumed office contained the following paragraph:

"I hope I may before long have the pleasure of calling upon you in Washington and I can assure you of a most cordial welcome by the Government and people of Canada if you find it possible to maintain the happy tradition established by your predecessors in office by visiting Ottawa."

After Prime Minister St Laurent made his visit to President Eisenhower in Washington in May 1953 the invitation was re-extended for the latter to visit Ottawa later in the year which the President did on November 13-14, 1953 accompanied by Mrs. Eisenhower. The Governor General's letter of invitation to the President and Mrs. Eisenhower was transmitted by the Canadian Embassy, Washington on or about October 10, 1953. The visit was labelled an official courtesy visit.

- (a) The Presidential Party on the train totalled 18 persons plus an unknown number of US Secret Service men. No State Department officials accompanied the President since there was an agreement between Prime Minister St. Laurent and US Ambassador Stuart that there need be no discussion of political and economic questions. The visit, while official, was to be purely a courtesy visit. In fact, the President declared publicly that he did not intend to discuss either continental defence or the St Lawrence Project. SSEA and Mrs. Pearson, US Ambassador and Mrs. Stuart and the Secretary to the Governor General welcomed the President at the Canadian border (see attachment "A" p 11 Visit to Canada - Arrangements issued by the Department of the Secretary of State). Approximately 25 US press, radio, newsreel and television representatives were in pullman cars attached to the presidential train from Washington. The Department of course wrote the customary letters to Citizenship and Immigration and Customs and Excise requesting all courtesies for the presidential party and newsmen.