

*The President of France*

Canada over the years has been honoured by visits by the heads of state of several great countries, but never in its history by the President of France. Canada was discovered by a Frenchman in 1534. Our existence, therefore, has been known for 417 years, and although it could hardly be said that we have waited all those years for this visit, nevertheless I can assure you, Mr. President, that the warmth of our welcome is in direct ratio with the warmth of the 417 summers of our existence.

As we listened to your address this afternoon we recalled that when we go back to the birth of our nation we go back to France. It is interesting to note that when the first Frenchman arrived in Canada he sailed up those great waters which were to be known as the St. Lawrence or St. Laurent, and that when the first president of France to visit Canada arrived in our country he was greeted by a great prime minister bearing the same name, St. Laurent.

It was Jacques Cartier, a Frenchman from St. Malo, who first set foot in Canada and carried the cross and the fleur-de-lis to the island of Hochelaga. It was another Frenchman, Champlain, who established the first

colony in Canada and founded the city of Quebec. It was a French Jesuit priest, Marquette, who first sailed in a frail canoe through the treacherous waters which led to the great lakes and on to the Mississippi. It was French civilization which was first implanted in Canada. Since that time we have added the customs, the traditions, the language and the literature of the British, and, in more recent years, of many other countries. In 417 years we have grown from a trading post, to a colony, to a nation. The progress which we have made would not have been possible had we not been blessed with peace. Throughout our history we have never had an extensive war within our boundaries. Geography, partly, has made that possible for us. We trust that in the future the good sense and the unselfish spirit of mankind will make that possible for France.

On behalf of the members of the House of Commons of Canada I would ask you to extend greetings to the members of the national assembly of France, and to assure them that your visit has made even stronger the ties which bind Canada and France together as friendly peace-loving nations. Vive la France! Vive le Canada! Vive le Roi! Vive le Président!

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