

We have maintained and developed other historical relations of considerable importance to Canada. Although the direct political link between France and its colony on the St. Lawrence ended in the eighteenth century, French-Canadians remained strongly attached to the traditions and way of life which they had established in the New World and have always identified themselves with the world-wide associations of French language and culture.

In recent years, a number of steps have been taken to strengthen the historical links with France and to develop a relationship between that nation and Canada as a whole - not only French-speaking Canada - which will serve the interests of both under present world conditions. Consultations between governments and parliaments, measures to increase trade and technological co-operation, and cultural exchanges have formed part of this programme.

We are sometimes asked whether differences of viewpoint between France and its allies over NATO matters do not impede this strengthening of relations. Our answer is simple. We disagree with the French decision to withdraw from the structure of military integration set up within the alliance. We adhere to the conception of the alliance shared by the majority of its members.

But we must also consider the position and influence of this leading European nation and its capacity to contribute to a general lessening of tension in Europe. These would call for a particular effort to strengthen direct relations and to understand differing viewpoints even if we did not have our own special reasons for interest in France.

Relations with the United States have always been of major concern to Canada. Some people, and especially those who have little knowledge of Canadians or Americans, have insisted on seeing those relations in terms of inevitable antagonism or of the political, economic or cultural subordination of the smaller power to the larger.

Such allegations do an injustice to both Canadians and Americans. Canada of today has its roots, through New France and the Loyalist settlers who left the Thirteen Colonies, deep in the history of this continent. Our former Governor General, Vincent Massey, is a descendant of a Virginian family and our present Governor General, Georges Vanier, is a descendant of the settlers of New France. From the time of the American Revolution on, the northern half of the continent has followed a course of internal political development and eventually of independent national action in the world quite separate from that of the United States and dissimilar in a number of respects.

At the same time, we have shared with our neighbours to the south many of the characteristics of a New World society which were neither specifically American nor Canadian but North American. In these fields it is sometimes necessary to point out to visitors from other parts of the world who find us "Americanized" that it is just as true to say that Americans resemble Canadians as it is to say the reverse.