

On the occasion of the presentation of his Letter of Credence to His Excellency the Governor General, Mr. Thor Thors, Minister of Iceland issued the following statement:

Canada and Iceland are closely related through bonds of kinship, common history and friendship. One of the many tokens thereof is the exchange of diplomatic representatives between the two nations for the first time.

I am deeply aware of the great honour and privilege accorded to me to have been appointed Iceland's first Minister in Canada and it will give me the greatest happiness to endeavour to further and cement the understanding and friendly relations between our two peoples, which have always existed and have steadily become more explicit.

Iceland is proud to recall the historic fact that it was Leifr Eiriksson, who was born and brought up in Iceland, who discovered the great mainland of America and, first of all white men, set foot on American soil in the year 1000. Furthermore, it was the Icelander Thorfinnur Karlsefni who established the first European settlement in North America in the years 1003 to 1006. These are facts which originally bound together the history of Canada and the history of Iceland.

However, there are many other and closer common bonds.

The Canadian nation has gained its complete sovereignty and independence, not through the strength of arms, but through wise leadership and perseverance under the banners of democracy. The Republic of Iceland owes its independence to its able leaders of old and late and its thousand years old Parliament. Thus the bonds of democracy are our common heritage and so is the love of freedom and longing for independence.

Iceland is a small nation. Life has often been hard and through the centuries we have had to fight against heavy odds and merciless forces of nature and the outlook has sometimes been desperate during times of depression and darkness.

Iceland has had little to give to other nations. It must therefore be a matter for excuse if we pride ourselves that to Canada, more than to any other nation in the world, have we given what to us has meant a great sacrifice and at the same time been a source of great pride. Iceland has given Canada many good citizens. The Icelandic nation is grateful that in Canada they have found their happy homes and that they have succeeded in contributing to the general welfare of their fellow countrymen in the new land. The tens of thousands of people of Icelandic descent in Canada have proven to be loyal citizens of their adopted country. They have gained the respect of their fellow countrymen and at all times and in every walk of life have they been true to the finest traditions and best qualities of their mother nation.

But not only have we given. We have been recipients of great favours of true friendship from the people of Canada, not solely those of Icelandic descent, but all the people of Canada and from their Governments at all times. It suffices to mention that three Governors General of Canada, Lord Dufferin, Lord Tweedsmuir and the Earl of Athlone, have all made special visits to the Icelanders in Canada and rendered high tribute to them. The people of Iceland are thankful to the Canadian nation for the opportunities granted our kinfolk in this great country of past successes and bright future. We are happy to know that the

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