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VISIT OF PRESIDENT HARDING TO VANCOUVER, JULY 26, 1923

The first visit of any President of the United States to Canada was that of President Harding to Vancouver in July 1923. While Mr. W.H. Taft (US President from 1909-13) had a summer home at Murray Bay on the St Lawrence River, he never vacationed there while he was President. There is nothing in External Affairs files about President Harding's presidential party or programme, while in Vancouver. However Hansard of March 20, 1924 and April 25, 1924 records that the publisher (Mr. R.J. Cromie) of the Vancouver Sun presented to the National Press Gallery in Washington a large painting commemorating the historic visit and portraying President Harding "on the occasion of his addressing some forty thousand citizens of Canada in Stanley Park". Before its presentation, the Vancouver Sun had the painting exhibited in a number of Canadian cities including Ottawa, where it was on view in April 1924 in Birks' store. Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King, in an attempt to give a national character to the Washington presentation sent the following telegram on February 15, 1924 to the Vancouver Sun:

"On the occasion of the Sun's presentation to the National Press Gallery at Washington of the picture commemorating President Harding's greeting to the Canadian people at Vancouver, it gives me great pleasure to associate myself in the proceedings by expressing the hope that the feelings of mutual trust and good-will which the presentation symbolizes, and which it was Mr. Harding's aim to promote, may ever continue to subsist and strengthen as time goes on."

A partial text of President Harding's speech in Stanley Park is given in the Canadian Annual Review, 1923. (See attachment marked "A")

Sources: Hansard, March 20, 1944 pp 505-6; April 15, 1924 p 1366
Department of External Affairs file 1922-799 is missing and presumed to have been destroyed
Canadian Annual Review, 1923, pp 83-84