

Addressing French Canada at Montreal on November 21, 1872, Lord Dufferin declared in French:

"A brave and noble race which was the first to provide Europe with the means of importing civilization to the American continent. A valorous and fearless nation, whose explorations into the hinterland of this continent enabled European industry to take root not only on the shores of the St. Lawrence, but also in the rich valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi; through the sound judgment and the instinct that characterize them, the early forts they erected and the first settlements they established have today become the nucleus of large cities and powerful populations, and it is to their present co-operation and natural intelligence that we owe a good part of the prosperous state of this province."

Canada in France

Another reason for Canada to have a special affection for France, and for France to have a special affection for Canada, is that there has been an extension of Canada into France. In the course of two Great Wars 110,000 Canadians gave their lives. In so far as it has been possible for me to establish, there are 50,000 of these who lie buried in France. These are striking figures, which reveal the vigour, the valour and the courage of Canadians. Only a country which possesses these qualities can make such an effort despite a sparse population. No, Canada, with so many of her children over there, cannot renounce her intimate friendship with France. The dead and the living are but one in the narrow and profound communion of the nation.

Each of us carries the hope of those who have gone and those who are yet to come. Upon each of us is incumbent the duty to keep the sacred fire which, across the ages, has enlightened and inspired men who adhere faithfully to the principles of truth, of justice, and of charity.

A part of France belongs to us: Vimy, where on the Canadian monument there are inscribed the names of more than 11,000 Canadians missing during the First World War. The Government of France has officially ceded to us this most sacred ground. But it is not only Vimy which belongs to us. I claim the land wherever our dead lie in France. Canadians, whether living or dead, will always be at home there. Our dead rest far from their native land, it is true, but the flowers of France adorn their graves and French hearts surround them with profound and grateful affection, particularly on Remembrance Day. Recently, at a large official luncheon in Montreal, the French Minister of Cultural Affairs proposed the following toast:

"I lift my glass to the first French child who, on Remembrance Day, will put a flag on the tomb of a Canadian soldier."

The landings on the sixth of June were profoundly meaningful for our country. Many of the Canadians who, at that time, set foot on the soil of Normandy were the descendants of the French pioneers who, during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, left their country to found a New France.