

# PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 1953.

The Department of External Affairs released today the text of messages of congratulation that the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. L.S. St. Laurent, has sent to Colonel John Hunt, Kt. C.B.E., D.S.O., leader of the British expedition which conquered Mount Everest, and to Mr. E. P. Hillary, K.B.E., and Tensing Bhutia, the men who reached the summit. These messages have been conveyed to the climbers following their return from Mount Everest to Khatmandu, the capital of Nepal.

Following is the text of Mr. St. Laurent's message to Colonel Hunt: "I was in London when the news was received that the expedition led by you had conquered Mount Everest. I shared the elation felt by your fellow-countrymen, by all the peoples of the Commonwealth, and, I am sure, by men and women of goodwill everywhere. That men, by a determined exercise of will, have at last surmounted the peak which for so long has stood as a symbol of the forbidding and the inaccessible, should be an inspiration to all of us. I have read with particular interest that the gallant men who reached the summit flew there not only the British, Indian and Nepalese flags but also the flag of the United Nations. This was a fine gesture. Please accept my sincere congratulations, both to yourself and to all members of your expedition, on your splendid achievement."

Following is the text of his message to Mr. Hillary: "It was with particular pleasure that my fellow-Canadians and I heard the news that a New Zealander was one of the two men who had finally climbed to the summit of Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world. We Canadians have stood shoulder to shoulder with New Zealanders in the past, and there is a real bond of comradeship between us. With New Zealanders, with the other peoples of the Commonwealth, and with men of goodwill in all countries, we rejoice in your achievement. Please accept my sincere congratulations."

Following is the text of his message to Tensing Bhutia: "I would like you to know that the people of Canada are proud of your splendid achievement in climbing Mount Everest, after making repeated ascents. With the peoples of Nepal and India, with the other peoples of the Commonwealth, and with men of goodwill everywhere we rejoice in your success. It has only served to increase

our admiration for the redoubtable Sherpas. We also feel that the people of the West have been brought a little closer to the people of the East by the joint victory won by you and by your companion from New Zealand. Please accept my sincere congratulations."

Specially made Canadian sleeping bags, which had been used by Mr. Eric Shipton on his reconnaissance of Mount Everest in 1951 and in his assault on a neighbouring Himalayan mountain in 1952, were purchased by the Royal Geographical Society for the twelve climbing members of the expedition which conquered Everest last month. The bags, on which the expedition has reported favourably, are similar to those which form part of the R.C.A.F.'s arctic equipment but are designed to give greater warmth because of the difficulty of conserving body heat at very high altitudes.

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