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ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN  
CANADA AND THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, announced today the establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In the desire to strengthen relations and ties of friendship between Canada and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the governments of the two countries have agreed to establish diplomatic relations, at a level of ambassador.

-- Mr. J. Gignac, at present Canadian Ambassador in Beirut, has been appointed Ambassador to Saudi Arabia on a non-resident basis. A biography of Mr. Gignac is attached.

JACQUES GIGNAC

Mr. Jacques Gignac was born in Shawinigan, Quebec on July 24, 1928. He attended the University of Montreal from which he received a B.A. in 1949 and where he followed post-graduate courses in Sociology; the Institut Catholique de Paris, from which he received degrees in theology (1955) and in Social Sciences (1957); and the Sorbonne, from which he received a degree in literature (1957). In 1958 he taught at le Collège Sainte-Marie in Montreal.

Having entered the Department of External Affairs in 1958, he saw service at Headquarters in Ottawa, the Canadian Consulate General in Boston and the Canadian Embassy in Paris. Reassigned to Ottawa in 1965, he was appointed Head of the Cultural Programmes Section of the Cultural Affairs Division and, in 1968, named Head of that Division. In this capacity, Mr. Gignac had primary responsibility in the negotiation and implementation of a number of cultural agreements and exchange programmes with other countries. In 1970 Mr. Gignac was appointed Ambassador to Lebanon and subsequently accredited to Syria, Jordan, and Iraq.

Mr. Gignac is married to the former Françoise Teisserenc and has five children.