



Flag Day

Ottawa, ON - February 15, 2006 - 16h15 - 4:18 minutes

STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): (APPLAUSE) Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to join you today for this very special ceremony. Today is a truly historic day in the life of our country. It is historic for two important reasons. First, 41 years ago, the first red and white maple leaf flag was raised above Parliament Hill, and subsequently, in every corner of this great nation from coast to coast to coast. And second, today is a momentous occasion as we, the government and the people of Canada officially receive that first flag that flew over Parliament Hill on February the 15th, 1965. J'aimerais tout d'abord offrir mes remerciements les plus sincères à Madame Elizabeth Hoffman-Lamoureux, pour avoir permit de concrétiser ce moment. Son mari, l'honorable Lucien Lamoureux, un distingué ancien président de la Chambre des communes, a protégé ce symbole unique et

puissant de notre pays. Madame Hoffman-Lamoureux, je vous remercie pour votre générosité et plus important encore pour votre empressement à vous joindre à nous aujourd'hui et faire de cette cérémonie un évènement encore plus significatif. Merci beaucoup. (APPLAUSE) Since 1867 our national flags have witnessed many of the defining moments that Canadians have lived through. The evolving versions of the red ensign were there when Canadians fought on the battlefields of the Great War and again around the globe in the Second World War. The new maple leaf flag helped us welcome the world to Expo 67 and greeted visitors when we hosted the 1976 and 1988 Olympic Games and it was there flying proudly when we ushered in the new millennium, the new century in the year 2000. Last year it was visible as Canadian forces provided crucial disaster relief in Southern Asia, in New Orleans and in Pakistan. En fait au cours des 40 dernières années, la feuille d'érable a orné le revers de délégués du Canada. Elle a été portée bien en évidence sur les uniformes des canadiens qui ont travaillé à promouvoir les valeurs et les intérêts canadiens à l'étranger. Elle a même fait le tour du globe lors du mission spatiale. Our flag, ladies and gentlemen, is much more than a design printed on a cloth. It is a national symbol, and symbols, when they are rooted in good things, bring people together. Now one of my very first

memories, certainly my first political memory, is the passion the flag debate aroused in my neighborhood in Toronto and I have a memory of the day my kindergarten class was called out for the raising of the new flag over Northley elementary school. That vigorous yet truly democratic debate about the choice of our flag over 40 years ago was about a design, not about a destination and to all who participated in that debate our flag, whatever the final choice, represents a country that is strong, united, independent and free, and determined to stay so. It represents us and that is why we feel so proud when we see it flying at home and abroad. And it is the duty of all of us as Canadian citizens to ensure that this flag inspires just as much pride in future generations, because soon we will be asking those generations to carry it and our country farther and higher. On this national Flag Day let all of us celebrate the values that our flag symbolizes, let us rededicate ourselves to upholding those fundamental values that have made Canada the great nation it is today. À tous ceux qui sont présents ici aujourd'hui et à tous les canadiennes et canadiens un rejour de drapeau national du Canada. To all of you here today and to all Canadians happy national Flag Day. Thank you. Merci beaucoup.

(APPLAUSE)

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