

Message delivered by
Major General (R'td) The Honourable Edmund Dillon
Acting Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
on the celebration of the National Day of Canada
Thursday 6th July, 2017

Your Excellency Carla H. Rufelds, High Commissioner of Canada;

The Honourable Mr. Justice Ivor Archie, Chief Justice of the Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago;

Acting Chief of Defence Staff, Hayden Pritchard;

The Honourable Kelvin Charles, Chief Secretary of the Tobago House
Assembly;

Your Excellencies, Heads of Missions, and other Members of the Diplomatic
Corps;

Other Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good evening everyone,

It gives me great pleasure to extend on behalf of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, and on my own behalf, congratulatory greetings to the Government and the people of Canada on the celebration of your National Day. This is an eventful and exciting year for your country as it marks the 150th anniversary of Canada becoming a self-governing state under the British Crown on July 1st, 1867.

Your Excellency, the four pillars of your 150th anniversary demonstrate your country's significant efforts to foster tolerance among the populace, promote environmental awareness and address the specific needs and concerns of all your citizens. These four pillars are exemplary to other nations, including Trinidad and Tobago.

In this context, it is incumbent on me to highlight the venue selected for this evening's celebration. This is poignant, not only for the beauty and tranquility of the Royal Botanical Gardens, but also for the deeper symbolism and connection to one of the principal pillars of the 150th anniversary commemoration - that of promoting environmental awareness. Canada has long been heralded as one of the champions of environmental preservation and sustainable development. This was visibly demonstrated in the principled positions your country took during the negotiation of the Paris Agreement and Canada's continued commitment to addressing the challenges posed by climate change to this fragile ecosystem we all inhabit called planet earth.

Your Excellency, Canada and Trinidad and Tobago have enjoyed a vibrant and mutually beneficial relationship since the establishment of

diplomatic ties in 1962. Our countries have cooperated at a bilateral level in a myriad of areas including security, information technology, education and training and agriculture.

Canada has been an especially strong ally in the area of security cooperation and has been instrumental in building the capacity of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Canada's valuable contribution towards the funding of criminal justice reform in Trinidad and Tobago must also be acknowledged.

Canada also continues to be a country of choice for students pursuing their tertiary level education. In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago has benefited greatly from the scholarship opportunities offered and awarded to our students through the Canada-CARICOM Leadership Scholarships and the Emerging Leaders in the Americas Program scholarships.

In addition to these areas of collaboration, Canada is one of the top three investors in Trinidad and Tobago. These investments, which are concentrated largely in petroleum, oil, gas and financial sectors, have played a key role in shaping our commercial landscape. Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the value of such investment and the recent signing of the Reciprocal Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement is a clear indication of this country's commitment to creating an attractive and secure environment for future investment.

As strong as Canada's influence has been in Trinidad and Tobago, it is noteworthy that Trinidad and Tobago has played a key role in shaping

the diverse tapestry, which defines your remarkable nation. Your Excellency, as you are aware, Canada is home to a significant Trinidad and Tobago community with over 100,000 individuals living mostly in the Greater Toronto Area. Our diaspora has actively participated in all walks of Canadian life ranging from the annual Caribana festival in Toronto to the political sphere, with a national of Trinidad and Tobago, being the longest serving female member of Parliament in Canada.

Your Excellency, over the past 150 years Canada has earned the respect and admiration of the international community. We in Trinidad and Tobago share these sentiments and recognize Canada for the friend and ally it has continued to be. It is therefore an honour and pleasure to join you as you mark this special milestone.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in offering a toast on behalf of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, to the Government and people of Canada and to the enduring friendship between our two nations

Thank You.