

Pre-Coronation Celebration – May 5, 2023

Welcome

Good afternoon and welcome to you all.

I am Robert Wilkins, the President of Heritage Branch, which is the Montreal chapter of The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada, the sponsor of this Pre-Coronation Celebration.

First, I must thank the Macdonald Stewart Foundation and its Executive Director, Major Thomas Leslie, for allowing the use of this beautiful mansion for our Celebration. His operatic voice has already thrilled us, accompanied by the talented pianist Diana Wall, and he will lead us later in singing our Royal and National Anthems.

It is with great joy that we greet our guest of honour, the Honourable J. Michel Doyon, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, His Majesty's official representative in our Province. His Honour has travelled from Quebec City to join us today and deliver a special message on this historic occasion. We also welcome his chef de cabinet, Mr. Jean-François Provençal, and his aide-de-camp.

Votre Honneur, au nom de tous ceux et celles qui sont présents ici, je vous remercie pour votre gentillesse en acceptant notre invitation. Nous avons hâte d'entendre le message que vous allez nous livrer aujourd'hui.

Nous accueillons également le Très Révérend Bertrand Olivier, doyen de la Cathédrale Christ Church. Dean Olivier will lead us in a prayer for King Charles and Queen Camilla a little later this evening.

We are delighted as well that some members of our sister-branch, the Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch of the UELAC have joined us today from the Eastern Townships. That delegation is led by my good friend and colleague, Michel Racicot of Cowansville.

Looking out from this lectern, I see a great many friendly faces from different groups and associations, such as the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, the Royal Commonwealth Society, the Atwater Library, the 78th Fraser Highlanders Regiment and the Black Watch Regiment. In addition, I wish to greet some personal friends of my wife Maura and me who support our constitutional monarchy and want to celebrate here and now in Montreal the big event that will take place in London tomorrow – an event we have not seen for seven decades and which may never happen again in our lifetimes.

Descendants of United Empire Loyalists have a special reason for rejoicing at tomorrow's coronation, because King Charles will be ascending the same throne once occupied by his fifth great-grandfather, George III – the king the Loyalists honoured, to whom they remained loyal despite persecution during the American Revolution, under whose colours (the Queen Anne flag displayed here) they fought and who finally migrated northwards in the thousands so as to continue living under British rule . They were the first group of political refugees in Canadian history,

seeking the blessings of peace, security, civil rights, the rule of law and freedom under the Crown. They set the pattern for so many later groups of political refugees who have come to Canada in the last two centuries in quest of those same blessings.

Today, for all Canadians – regardless of their ancestry – the monarchy remains an indispensable component of our parliamentary democracy, as well as a key feature of our national identity.

INTRODUCTION

Our guest of honour is superbly qualified to comment on the monarchy and its relevance today. His CV lists so many accomplishments that I must summarize it, owing to time limitations.

Educated first at Laurentian University, His Honour went on to earn a Master's, a law degree and a doctorate in History, coupled with doctoral studies in Philosophy, at Université Laval. Today he is governor of its foundation.

Il a enseigné l'histoire avant son admission au Barreau en 1972, après quoi il a pratiqué le droit dans deux cabinets à Québec, jusqu'à sa nomination au poste de lieutenant-gouverneur en 2015. Au cours de sa carrière de juriste, J. Michel Doyon a été président de l'Association du Barreau de Québec en 2003, puis président du Barreau du Québec en 2007. De 1972 à 1974, il fut chargé de cours en droit corporatif à l'École du Barreau et ensuite professeur de 1975 à 1988. Par la suite, il a servi comme membre actif des

conseils d'administration de nombreux organismes sans but lucratif, notamment Radio-Canada-CBC, de 1988 à 1998, ainsi que de plusieurs fondations. Parmi ses nombreuses autres réalisations, il est un ancien président de la Société historique de Québec.

In 1992, our Lieutenant-Governor became a Queen's Counsel and in 2009 was made an avocat émérite. In 2016, he was awarded the Médaille du Barreau, the Quebec Bar's highest distinction. In addition, he is the recipient of the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Canadian Confederation, as well as the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals. Apart from all that, he is Honorary Colonel of 3rd Wing of the RCAF in Bagotville, and holds several other military titles in various regiments. He is also Vice-Prior of the Order of St. John, Quebec Council.

Le 26 juillet 2022, pour son engagement pour le renforcement de la relation entre la France et le Québec, ainsi que pour sa contribution au rayonnement de la langue française, il fut nommé chevalier dans l'Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur par le président de la République française.

He is happily married to Pauline Théberge and the proud father of two children and six grandchildren. In short, I am sure you will agree in saying of His Honour that c'est tout un personnage.

So it is with much gratitude and eager anticipation that I ask you to welcome our Lieutenant-Governor, the Honourable J. Michel Doyon. Votre Honneur, veuillez prendre la parole.