



Jonathan Wilkinson

NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

June 23, 2017

Canada's 150th birthday

An occasion as historic as Canada's 150th birthday is one to celebrate – and celebrate we will. Here in North Vancouver, I look forward to joining many of you and your families on July 1st for the Canada Day Parade and for the daytime and evening festivities at Waterfront Park.

But such a milestone also calls out for us to pause and reflect on the kind of nation we have become, our place in the world and our dreams for the future.

Growing up in Saskatchewan, Tommy Douglas was important in shaping my world view. About dreams, I recall his advice to us all:



"We should never, never be afraid or ashamed about dreams. The dreams won't all come true; we won't always make it; but where there is no vision a people perish. Where people have no dreams and no hopes and aspirations, life becomes a meaningless wilderness."

His own dream?

"My dream is for people around the world to look up and to see Canada like a little jewel sitting at the top of the continent."

Tommy Douglas, Premier of Saskatchewan, 1944-1961

That quote, and the inspiration it provided, caused me – on this momentous anniversary - to reflect on other “words of wisdom” provided by Canada’s leaders over the last 150 years.

My Canada 150 offering to you is to share a few of my personal favourites.



"Let us live together in confidence and cohesion; with more faith and pride in ourselves and less self-doubt and hesitation; strong in the conviction that the destiny of Canada is to unite, not divide; sharing in cooperation, not in separation or in conflict; respecting our past and welcoming our future."

Lester B. Pearson, Prime Minister, 1963-1968



"I am a Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, or free to choose those who shall govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind."

John Diefenbaker, Prime Minister, 1957-1963



"There is no such thing as a model or ideal Canadian. What could be more absurd that the concept of an 'all Canadian' boy or girl? A society which emphasizes uniformity is one which creates intolerance and hate."

Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister, 1968-1979, 1980-1984



"Of the range of opportunities open to a society like Canada, one of the most important lies outside of our physical borders, in a world whose explosive tensions, and conflicts, and inequalities would benefit from the moderation, and initiative, and respect for others that have been among Canada's signature characteristics."

Joe Clark, Prime Minister, 1979-1980



"Canada's success as a diverse and inclusive nation didn't happen by accident, and won't continue without effort. The future is never certain. It depends on the choices we make today. Compassion, acceptance, and trust; diversity and inclusion—these are the things that have made Canada strong and free. Not just in principle, but in practice."

Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister, 2015-present

I recognize just how fortunate I am to have grown up in Canada. Canada is not perfect. But together we have created a very, very unique land. One filled with natural beauty to be sure. But also one that has developed a society that truly values diversity, tolerance, the rights of individuals, freedom, compassion, equality of opportunity, respect for the democratic process and for the rule of law.

On this, Canada's 150th birthday, we have much to celebrate.

Happy Canada Day!

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