

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 54/8 An address by the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent, at a dinner given the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Konrad Adenauer, at Bonn, Germany, February 10, 1954.

Let me first say how glad I am to be here in Germany, to return the visit paid to my country last April by you, Mr. Chancellor. I should like to assure you that your visit to us was very much appreciated. To many Canadians I am sure it seemed a symbol of the new relationship which is developing so rapidly between our two countries. I am confident that you, Mr. Chancellor, sensed the feeling of welcome which pervaded the atmosphere of your visit.

This is my first visit to your country and I hope you will bear with me while I try to describe to you a few of my first impressions.

I am first of all very greatly impressed with the economic recovery and reconstruction to be seen on all sides. This feat, which is the more impressive because of the shortness of time it has taken to achieve it, is a tribute to the vigour and enterprise of the German people.

But more impressive than your economic recovery is what I think of as the spiritual recovery of Germany. Within a few years you have built the foundations of democracy and freedom, resurrected the traditional values of Christianity, and reintroduced a vigorous system of parliamentary governments. I sincerely hope that this rebuilding has been well done, and I am speaking for all Canadians when I express this hope.

The rebuilding of Germany has gone on in the midst of immense difficulties. The war cost the lives of very many of your young men. Many of your people lost their homes in the East and have crowded into the Federal Republic as refugees. Many others have fled into Western Germany from the terror that prevails in the part of Germany occupied by the Soviet Union.

In Berlin, the difficulties have been particularly great but the brave people of that city, aided from Western Germany and abroad, have kept the lamp of freedom burning brightly. It has become a symbol for the free world. I am proud that Canada since 1945 has maintained its connection with the people of Berlin through our representatives there. I am only sorry that I am unable to visit that great city on this trip.

Let us here express a tribute to the late Mayor of Berlin, Ernst Reuter, whose fortitude was an example for all freedom-loving people and whose sudden death was a great loss to his city, to Germany and to the free world.