

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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Text of a speech broadcast
by Mr. L. S. St. Laurent,
Prime Minister of Canada,
on January 1, 1949.

Fellow Citizens of Canada:

I am glad to have this opportunity of extending to you my best wishes for 1949. To those who are in their own homes and with their families around them, to those who are unable to be with their loved ones today, to all Canadians everywhere, I wish a happy new year. To the people of Newfoundland as well, I send my greetings in the hope that before 1949 is very old, I may address them as fellow Canadians.

As we enter the new year, we are all probably wondering what it will bring to each of us personally, and to Canada and to the world. Fathers and Mothers will be thinking mainly of the health and well-being of their families. Young people will be looking to the new year, perhaps with some uncertainties about what the future holds, but still, in this land of ours, it should be with hope and confidence. Our old people no doubt will be recalling the past, as well as thinking of what the future may have in store.

All of us have cause to feel thankful that, in a troubled world, we have the great good fortune to be living in Canada. That in itself is enough to justify this sense of hope and confidence, though it may not dispel all anxieties.

I share those hopes and these anxieties. Like a good many of you, I am the head of a family and my sons and daughters have families of their own. I think a good deal about what my children and my children's children may have to face in the world of the future. But despite doubts that sometimes are oppressive, I do remain hopeful and confident. Providence will not abandon men of good will.

We are fortunate to be living in a land where religion is respected by all, and the religious authorities have the fullest freedom. We are apt to take such freedom for granted. But the increasingly brutal persecutions of religious leaders in countries behind the Iron Curtain have shocked all civilized people. Such examples remind us how precious is the personal and religious freedom which is our birth-right.

We, in this land, are a blessed and happy people. We have a social order which is unsurpassed and, with the possible exception of the United States, we enjoy a level of material welfare higher than any other nation. A terrible war is behind us. Personal and national restoration to peace-time life in Canada have gone forward swiftly. Of course, we who are so fortunate cannot remain indifferent to the condition of mankind in

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other lands. The world is one. In fortune and in misfortune; in prosperity and in poverty; in peace and war, all nations depend on one another. Though today, most of our families can sit around bountiful tables, we must not forget that elsewhere in the world, there are millions who are not so fortunate. Let us rejoice that we have been so favoured, but let us hope, too, happiness can be spread throughout the world.

The beginning of a new year is a time for making resolutions. I have no doubt that each one of us, in his own way, is resolved to do what he can to make the year 1949 a better year than 1948. In 1949 we must redouble our efforts in the quest of the peace and human welfare which the world so sorely needs. Let us enter the new year with confidence and determination. Let us pray to God that his wisdom and his love will enlighten us and ease man's burdens.

All my colleagues and you too, I am sure, join me in the prayer that 1949 will see the realization in lasting peace of the hopes of men of good-will in every land. May God be with us.
