

Speech for MP - Citizenship Ceremony

Good evening, friends.

I am honoured to be here with you today for this memorable occasion. We are welcoming 150 new Canadians to our community. How fortunate that we are doing this today, on the eve of Canada's 150th birthday.

One hundred and fifty is young, in the context of our world. We haven't even hit our stride yet. And look at what we've already accomplished.

Many of us here originally came from somewhere else. Whether *you* were born elsewhere, or your grandparents were, or *their* grandparents were – many of us were immigrants. Canadians today come from over 200 different ethnic origins. Canada gave us a home.

The 150 people taking the oath today will make their homes and raise their families here. People choose to come to Canada from all over the world because of the reputation we have built for being a strong, welcoming and prosperous nation.

Prosperity isn't something we can keep to ourselves. When we have the ability to help, we have the responsibility to help.

We are proud of our history of welcoming immigrants and refugees to Canada. Even before Confederation, this land welcomed refugees from the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Civil War.

Today's conflicts are spread across the globe but our message is the same: we will give you a home free from judgement, persecution and physical harm.

Thirty-seven thousand Hungarian refugees were welcomed in 1957 when they revolted against a communist government. Their resettlement impacted Canadian refugee policy to this day.

Our Prime Minister is actively seeking to strengthen our relationship with this country's First Nations peoples. We know that we are stronger together.

Over 40,000 Syrian refugees have been resettled in Canada. Some of them are here with us today, taking their citizenship oath.

Canada has long been called a mosaic for its celebration of differences. When you come to Canada, we don't want you to give up your beliefs or your culture. We want you to be who you are. We welcome you as you are. We learn from you, and that makes us stronger.

We learn from each other every day. We have grown into an enviable community of diverse cultures, one that we are proud of. We are proud of all Canadians.

You have persevered. You are strong. And your country stands with you.

Thank you.