

Statement by Ontario PC Interim Leader Jim Wilson Recognizing Finland's Independence Day

Hyvää päivää!

Today marks the 97th anniversary of Finland's Declaration of Independence from the Russian empire in 1917.

Members of the Canadian Finnish community in Ontario and Finns around the world commemorate December 6 as the day when the Finnish parliament declared Finland an independent state following the Russian revolution and the defeats in the First World War.

An Independence Day tradition in many Finnish homes is to light two candles in the windows in the evening. This custom is said to recall a time when two candles were placed in the window as a sign to Finnish soldiers that the house would offer them shelter and hide them from the Russians. This beautiful tradition reminds us that even today, we cannot take peace and freedom for granted.

Since its independence, Finland has become a diversified modern industrial economy with deep ties to the European Union, a culture with a strong history in music and the arts, and a nation of well-educated people who are leading in technological advancement into the 21st century.

On this special occasion, it is an honour for me to recognize the many contributions of the Finnish community to our province, along with its rich history and vibrant cultural heritage.

Finns immigrated to North America in large numbers prior to WWI and continued to do so in the first decade of Finnish independence. Today, over 130,000 people of Finnish descent call Canada home. I am proud to say that most Finnish Canadians reside in Ontario.

On behalf of the Ontario PC Caucus, I wish Ontario's Finnish Canadians a happy Independence Day celebration and continued peace and prosperity in the coming year.

Hyvää Itsenäisyyspäivää kaikille!