

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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December 24, 1941

CAUTION: The Prime Minister has prepared the following for delivery this afternoon upon the occasion of the lighting of the National Community Christmas Tree at the White House.

NOTE: Release is for editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 5:10 P. M., E. S. T. today.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

I have the honour to add an appendix to the message of Christmas goodwill and kindness with which my illustrious friend the President has encircled the homes and families of the United States by the message of Christmas eve which he has just delivered.

I spend this anniversary and festival far from my country, far from my family, and yet I cannot truthfully say that I feel far from home. Whether it be the ties of blood on my mother's side, or the friendships I have developed here over many years of active life, or the commanding sentiment of comradeship in the common cause of great races who speak the same language and to a very large extent worship the same altars and pursue the same ideals. Whichever it may be - or all of them together - I cannot feel myself a stranger here in the centre of the summit of these United States. I feel a sense of unity and fraternal association which, through all your kindness convinces me that I have a right to sit at your fireside and share your Christmas joys.

This is a strange Christmas Eve. Almost the whole world is locked in deadly struggle. Armed with the most terrible weapons which science can devise, the nations advance upon each other. Ill would it be for us this Christmastide if we were not sure that no greed for the lands or wealth of any other people has led us to the field. That no vulgar ambition, no sordid lust for material gain at the expense of others had led us to the field. Here in the midst of war, raging and roaring about us over all the lands and seas, creeping nearer to our hearts and homes. Here amidst all these tumults, we have the peace of the spirit in each cottage home and in every heart.

Therefore we may cast aside, for this night at least, the cares and dangers which beset us; and make the children happy in a world of storm. Here then, for one night only, each home throughout the English-speaking world should be a brightly lighted island of happiness and peace. Let the children have their night of fun and laughter; let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their thoughts; let us share to the full in their unstinted pleasure, before we turn again to the stern tasks in the year that lies before us. But now, by our sacrifice and daring, these same children shall not be robbed of their inheritance, or denied the right to live in a free and decent world.

And so, in God's mercy, a Happy Christmas to you all.
