

VERNMENT



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 49/49

Translation of a Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Louis S. St. Laurent, delivered in French to the La Société Historique Franco-Américaine, Boston Mass., on December 15, 1949.

First of all, I should like to express my thanks to the President and Directors of the Société Historique Franco-Américaine. I fully appreciate the honour bestowed upon me, and realize that I owe it more to the position which I occupy than to my own personal worth. However, it is as a private individual that I am here tonight, as, contrary to belief, one is really Prime Minister only in his own country. However, I wish to express my profound gratitude to you for having given us the opportunity to participate in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of your organization.

Half a century in the life of an individual, a Society or a nation, represents an important milestone, and it is worthy of special mention. The years between 1900 and 1950 have been particularly weighty in the history of humanity. I will leave to others better qualified than myself the task of recording the glorious achievements of your Society during that period; however, it is my great privilege to offer to your Society on this occasion the congratulations of Canada. I do this all the more freely because your Society, on account of its aims and its influence, is entitled to the admiration of every Canadian. If there are degrees in the feelings of friendship which my country bears towards the United States, those whose ancestors are the same as ours, are nearer to us than any other group. Therefore, I bring you these greetings tonight on behalf of your brothers and friends in Canada.

The half century which will come to an end in a few days will have been one of the most eventful periods in the history of the world. Empires have crumbled like 'châteaux de cartes'; continents have been shaken to their foundations; civilizations which were considered to be eternally stable now have begun to doubt their solidity. Scientific discoveries have radically altered basic notions which were traditionally accepted as matter of fact. But it is no less true that the progress of science and the development of means of communication have given the world a unity and a feeling of solidarity which did not exist before our time.

Although the North American continent has known more security and peace than other parts of the world, we have not been strangers to the march of time. Another factor which has intensified our participation in the life of other continents is the growing influence of our two countries due largely to the growth of our populations and the exploitation of our natural