



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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OUR NORTH AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP

An address by Mr. L.S. St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada, at St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York, on June 11, 1950.

I want to begin what I have to say by a word of thanks to the Board of Trustees and Faculty of St. Lawrence University for the honour they are doing me by conferring upon me the degree of Doctor of Laws and thereby making me a member of St. Lawrence University.

This is the second time in a week that I have thanked a university in the United States for conferring an honorary degree upon the person who happens to be the Prime Minister of Canada. And that is not all. The other degree was conferred last Tuesday by St. Louis University. So I am just a little afraid that since my name happens to be Louis St. Laurent - some pronounce it St. Lawrence - there may be a good many people who will think I must be totally lacking in modesty in allowing this to occur.

Happily you here at St. Lawrence know it is only a coincidence and not an expression of personal vanity. I am afraid I embarrassed the President of the University last year by agreeing to come here and then losing my voice in a general election campaign. So what I am doing today is really acknowledging, a full year later, an honour this university had offered, and I had been hoping to accept, a year ago.

Now I will confess to you that there was perhaps just a touch of vanity in the readiness with which I accepted the honour. The name of the University does appeal to me, and the fact that the University belongs to this great river valley, in which so many of your families and mine have dwelt for some three centuries did make an appeal, which it would have been hard for anyone with a sense of history and tradition to resist.

I know, of course, that the honorary degrees which are conferred upon me are given largely because of the position I hold and that they are intended primarily as an honour to Canada. But I can assure you that both as Prime Minister of Canada, as long as I am in that office, and afterwards as plain Louis St. Laurent I shall always be proud to belong to St. Lawrence University. I understand there is usually a question of reciprocity involved in receiving an honorary degree. According to the nursery rhymes even little Tommy Tucker was expected to sing for his supper. Fortunately in the case of an honorary degree, the person who is to receive the degree does not have to pass the examination. But no one wants to fail.