

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to speak to the Richelieu Clubs of the Ottawa area this evening. Ever since the Richelieu club was founded here in Ottawa in 1944, it has played an important role in promoting the French language across Canada. Today, the movement has extended to eight countries on three continents. This meeting is therefore an especially appropriate setting in which to talk about the role that the Francophones outside Quebec should play in the Francophone Summit.

First of all, I cannot overemphasize the historic significance that the year just begun will have for Canada. At the Francophone Summit, to be held in Québec next September, Canada will show, more vividly than at any other time in its history, that it is a country where the French language is a major instrument for its development and for its relations with a large community of foreign countries.

Only a few years ago, an event of this sort seemed barely possible. But thanks to the open-mindedness and determination of our Prime Minister, Mr. Brian Mulroney, who has effectively implemented a