



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No 49/9.

Translation of a speech by the Prime Minister,
Mr. St. Laurent, delivered in French at a
Richelieu Club luncheon, in Montreal, on
March 5, 1949.

I am glad to have this opportunity of addressing the members
of the Richelieu Club of Montreal.

I need not praise the Richelieu Clubs. Although established
only three years ago, they have already shown their mettle. They have
rapidly multiplied across the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario, from
Ottawa to Rimouski and from Sudbury to Chicoutimi.

As you know, it was in the federal capital that the Richelieu
Clubs originated. I see evidence in this fact of the desirability for
all Canadians to have contacts between the various provinces for the
mutual benefit of all. In it also I see evidence of the impossibility of
confining to the Province of Quebec those Canadians who speak my language
and belong to my religion; wherever they go, French-speaking Canadians
make an important contribution to our national life. The 26 Richelieu
Clubs which already exist (and I am told that others are about to be
organized) play a leading role in the social and educational spheres and
especially in the protection of needy children.

Our democratic system implies that all citizens should do their
part for the general welfare, and it is stimulating to think that our
professional and business men gather in such clubs, the aims of which
are so commendable and praiseworthy.

Your motto "Peace and Fraternity" shows the nobility and
generosity by which you are prompted, Gentlemen, and you will readily
understand why I have deemed it advisable to talk to you today of the
great problem of peace, which is no doubt always present in your minds.

This problem is one in which we are all interested and which
affects not only the citizens of today but also those of tomorrow towards
whom you are devoted. I can assure you that in spite of the false rumors
which certain people are spreading about me, there is nothing that I
have more at heart than the preservation of peace in the world.

When I say that I have nothing more at heart than peace, I
know that all honest Canadians will believe me because they know that I
am five times a father and thirteen times a grandfather. I shall never
forget the anxieties my wife and I went through while our son was
serving on the high seas aboard a Canadian corvette and I can assure
you that as long as I head the Government I shall spare no effort, I
shall do everything in my power to avert the threat of a new conflict.
I do not want to experience again the same anxieties, neither do I want
my children to experience them, and I wish also to spare them to all my
fellow-countrymen. I was not the only one to go through such an experience.
Many of my best friends have had a son killed or injured, and some of
them even died of grief. I have visited enough veterans' hospitals to
know what sad train of physical and moral sufferings war leaves behind it.