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# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 51/49 NORTH AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD OF TODAY

An address by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Louis S. St. Laurent, to the Economic Club of New York, on November 19, 1951.

...I chose the subject, "North America's Place in the World of Today", full well knowing that many of your members would be more competent to treat it than I might be; but I did so because, being a Canadian, I necessarily look at it from a somewhat different point of view, and I thought that a view of North America's place in the world of today from the Canadian angle might help to make the position clearer from your point of view here in the United States.

It is, of course, only the blind ones among us in North America today who do not realize we are directly concerned about what is happening in the rest of the world. It is always true, in some degree, that North America is concerned with what is happening in the rest of the world, just as it has always been true-- since Columbus' time-- that North Americans have been affected by the really important changes in the world outside this hemisphere. But it seems to me that the degree of concern has changed.

Before 1914, most North Americans, whether they lived in the United States or whether they lived in Canada, did not feel the need of paying much attention to what was happening across the Atlantic or on the other side of the Pacific. And we had little sense of responsibility for international affairs outside this hemisphere. For that, there were historical as well as geographical reasons.

In the 18th century, when the thirteen English colonies on the Atlantic seaboard cut their political ties with England and established the United States, this nation practically turned its back on Europe and faced westward across an almost empty continent, and the vast energies of the early settlers in this country, and of the thousands and thousands who later joined them, were concentrated on the development of a free and expanding society in North America. All you asked from Europe was to be left alone -- to be left in peace -- to live your lives in your own way -- in what it has become the fashion to call "the American way."

In Canada, our development was somewhat different. At the time of your War of Independence, the Canadian population was still almost exclusively French-speaking. The St. Lawrence Valley had been ceded to the British Crown only a dozen years before, and the leaders of your revolution expected to find ready support among the French-speaking