

1 MR. FIECHTLBAUER: Welcome, everybody, to our meeting
2 of the Foreign Correspondents Association. I have the honor
3 to welcome his Excellency, the Honourable Minister Marc Lalonde.

4 I am a non-elected, non-official of this Club.
5 Our President is sick; our Vice President is traveling, and so
6 I was told that perhaps the Government of non-elected officials
7 would work approximately as well as it does in the State of
8 Minnesota!

9 So welcome very much, Mr. Minister, to our meeting
10 today.

11 I think that some of my colleagues may have
12 experienced a similar thing that, when we are back home in
13 our Countries, we tend to believe that the problem of
14 National Unity in Canada perhaps is not that much of a
15 problem; just like the roaring tiger in the Jungles does
16 not look that bad if you are thousands of miles away from it.
17 But the closer you get -- and we all have come closer to this
18 problem -- the more we feel it is serious. Therefore, we
19 are very happy that we have a chance to ask you some
20 questions. And we are very grateful to you, sir, in that
21 you are seeing not only our United States of America colleagues--
22 but you are also talking to foreign correspondents from
23 several Countries in several Continents.

24 I was reminded, a little bit this morning, of an
25 article that I had read in the Montreal Gazette a couple of