

1 MINISTER LALONDE: Thank you very much.

2 My remarks are going to be very short, indeed!

3 I think we will probably have a more fruitful meeting
4 if I don't launch into a long speech.

5 As you have said, I have been appointed
6 Minister of State for Federal/Provincial Relations in
7 September. We have not had a position in Canada like
8 this for quite a long time. As a matter of fact, I used
9 to think that I was the first one to be appointed to such
10 a position--until I checked the record in history and found
11 that in the beginning of the Confederation in 1867, there
12 were three different Ministers responsible for Federal/
13 Provincial Relations! Each of them lasted about one year
14 and, after three years, Sir John Macdonald -- the Prime
15 Minister at the time -- had enough of these people,
16 apparently! I suspect that it was done, in the early
17 part of the Confederation, to help implement the new system
18 that followed the active Union, and the Prime Minister
19 needed somebody to see to it that the new system that was
20 being implemented would function reasonably smoothly.

21 I suppose it is to the credit of the system that
22 they could dispense with the Minister responsible for
23 that area so quickly!

24 The fact that I have, indeed, been assigned this
25 particular function, and that the Prime Minister created this