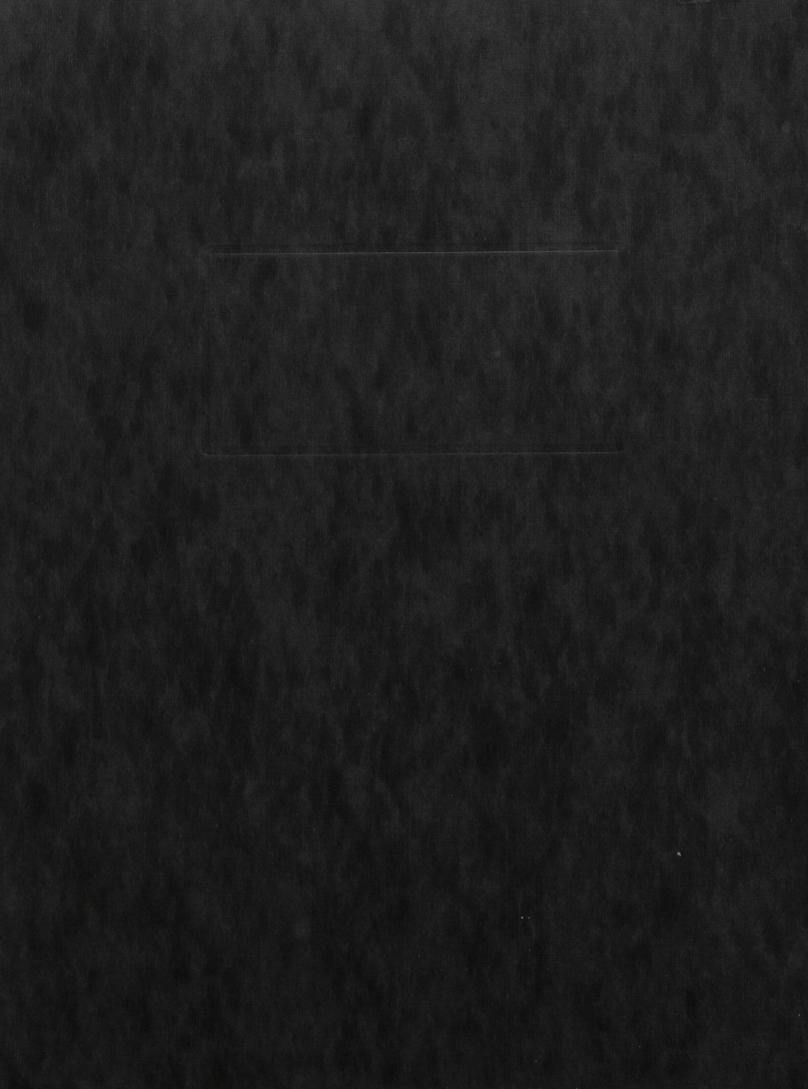
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Press briefing by the Honourable
Marc Lalonde, Minister of State for
Federal/Provincial Relations,
February 10,1978. -43235184



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The Presidential Room National Press Club Washington, D.C.

FRIDAY, February 10, 1978 2:00 p.m.

## - PRESS BRIEFING -

- By -

THE HONOURABLE MARC LALONDE

MINISTER OF STATE
-forFEDERAL/PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

## INTRODUCTION BY:

HUBERT FEICHTLBAUER

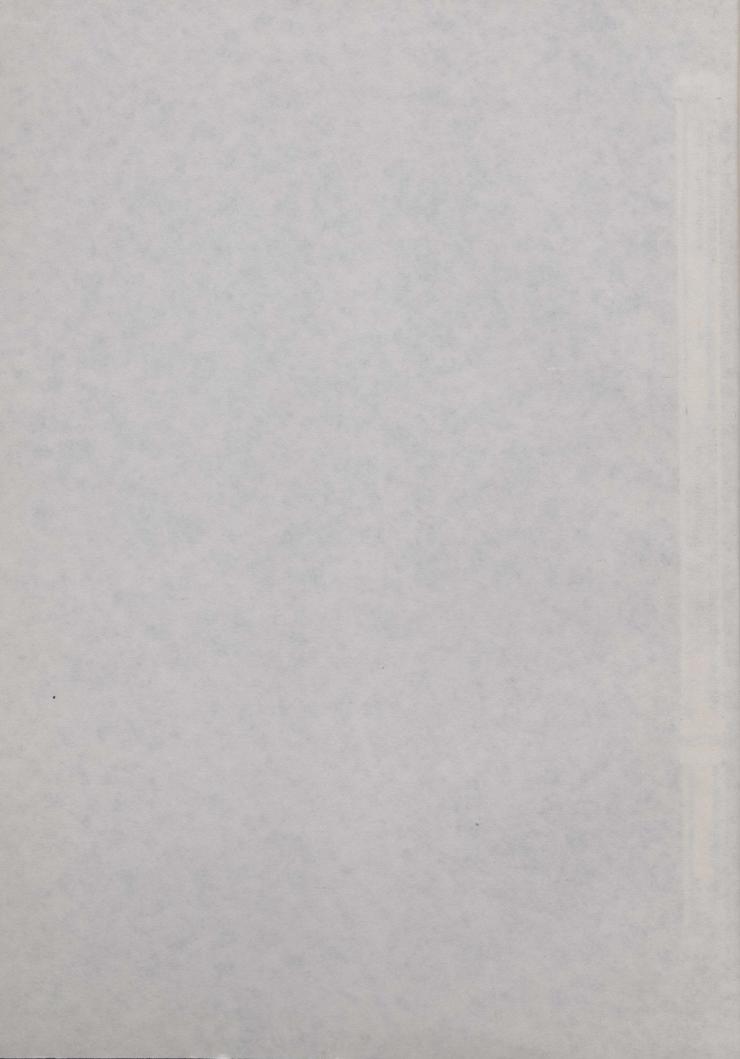
Member, Foreign Correspondents Association
National Press Club

## ATTENDING:

ROBERT J. MC GAVIN
First Secretary [Information]
Canadian Embassy

## AND:

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS



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

I am a non-elected, non-official of this Club.

Our President is sick; our Vice President is traveling, and so
I was told that perhaps the Government of non-elected officials
would work approximately as well as it does in the State of
Minnesota!

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

experienced a similar thing that, when we are back home in our Countries, we tend to believe that the problem of

National Unity in Canada perhaps is not that much of a problem; just like the roaring tiger in the Jungles does not look that bad if you are thousands of miles away from it.

But the closer you get -- and we all have come closer to this problem -- the more we feel it is serious. Therefore, we are very happy that we have a chance to ask you some questions. And we are very grateful to you, sir, in that you are seeing not only our United States of America colleagues but you are also talking to foreign correspondents from several Countries in several Continents.

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

and we allow enter the and we all here come closer to this

questions, And we are very grateful to you, sir, in this

weeks ago when and I think not quite unjustifiably the
author said that the American's ignorance of Affairs Canadia
was insulting; and that their indifference to them was,
at times, really maddening. So, perhaps, it might be a bit
gratifying mutually gratifying for you to be here
today, and be in a small but, most certainly, very interested
group of foreign correspondents; and I would like you to
kindly-give a little statement at the beginning, and then
every one of us may ask questions. The whole thing is
on the record-unless our guest will decide otherwise.

MINISTER LALONDE: Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Chairman. I wish to thank you for your invitation and for taking time to come and talk about Canadian affairs.

I am Minister of Federal/Provincial Relations

-- as has been indicated -- and, also, Minister responsible

for the Status of Women in Quebec -- in Canada -- and I

don't know whether there is any particular relationship

between the two.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Both are minorities!

MINISTER LALONDE: My appointment dates back

to last September. This was not a position that existed

in the Federal Government before; except between 1867 and

1870, the beginning of the Canadian Confederation.

My appointment had two purposes:

One was to try and coordinate in a more effective

way, the innumerable relationships that exist between our Provinces and the Federal State; and

Secondly, to supervise the development of policies having to do with National Unity and the current crisis; particularly between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Under that hat, I am responsible for working on the development of new Constitutional proposals, or proposals for Constitutional reforms in Canada, and the general strategy having to do with the Separatist threat in the Province of Quebec.

I think I should be taking questions, Mr.Chairman.

I don't think you expect from me a very elaborate opening statement, or a long diatribe on anything in particular.

I would be quite happy to take questions as they come and make my diatribes in answer to questions.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: That was a nice invitation!
Thank you.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Mr. Minister, this morning, the Today Show -- seen by millions of people in this Country -- had an interview on the whole question of the Separatist Movement, in effect; and particularly something which I think is called Bill 101, --

MINISTER LALONDE: Right.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS:--Forcing French language education on everybody.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Mr. Minister, this morning, he Today Show - seen by millions of people in this County had an interview on the wante question of the Separatist

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They also showed the gentleman -- who got a lot of applause -- who particularly thought that Quebec would be an independent State within one year.

Now, would you care to comment on:

- (a) Bill 101; and
- (b) On the prediction that was made?

MINISTER LALONDE: On Bill 101, it is an unfair reading to see it as forcing everybody to go to French schools

What Bill 101 does is that everybody who has had one parent educated in English in Quebec is entitled to send his children to English schools. Nonetheless, it is a very restrictive Bill because it means that an English speaking Canadian coming from outside of Quebec—or an American coming into Quebec—can send his children to an English school only on the basis of a special permission—a kind of a 3-year permit that can be renewed for another three years, subsequently.

So there <u>are</u> restrictive provisions; and it means that immigrants coming into Quebec have to send their children to the French school system.

It has to be remembered, however, that our French school system is also teaching English as a second language.

There has been a lot of opposition to the restrictive provisions of that particular Bill. We, as a Federal government have objected, most strenuously, to some

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of the provisions--particularly those restricting the movement of people, really; and particularly English speaking Canadians.

Opposition Parties have indicated that, if they came into Office, they would change some provisions of that Bill.

There were also restrictions on the use of the English language vis-a-vis the language of the Legislature -- that is, the public documents, the Bills, the laws passed, and so on -- and the use of the English language on behalf of companies in the Courts. But these have been ruled out by the Courts as unconstitutional.

So these two provisions -- the provisions affecting these two sectors -- are, for all practical purposes, "dead".

The ones dealing with Education are still on, and may very well be declared Constitutional by the Courts. They will also be contested, however; and then it is a battle inside of the political process to convince this Government, or its successor, to modify those rules.

We are, as I said, finding those provisions excessive, unduly restrictive, and detrimental to Quebec economically. Very much so!

As far as the forecast of Quebec being independent within one year, or even two or three years, I must say that is propaganda! The separation of Quebec is not being

will also be contested, bowever; and then it is a bettle inside	
We are, as I said, finding those provisions	

ten years ago. The percentage of Quebeckers who will vote for separation has varied between ten and twenty percent over the last fifteen years. It has not been a consistent upward trend. It has been cyclical. It has gone down as low as 11%. It has gone up as high as 20%, and you could fix it around 15% or 17%, at the present time. It is in those figures -- in that range.

Now, seeing this, the Separatists have been saying, "Well, what we want is not <u>full</u> separation. What we want is a 'Sovereignty Association'" -- they call it -- which would mean kind of a political autonomy with political union with the rest of Canada.

They have never defined what it means in practice. Even Mr. Levesque, in his latest interview in Time Magazine, is fudging it. But when you read what he says; at the end, it is "independence by any other name", I would say.

But the people in general are rather confused by those expressions, because you could argue that the present Federal system is a "Sovereignty Association" because any Federal system implies a division of sovereignty between two levels of Government, which we have.

But, again, the support for this is below 40%, even on that vague, fuzzy notion; so that the forecast that independence is going to be taking place in Quebec, as

I said -- not only in the next year, but in the next decade
-- I don't see it. I just don't see it!

boost did Levesque get from the reception he had in Paris?

MINISTER LALONDE: I think it was a good boost -certainly a good emotional boost -- inside of Quebec. There
was a lot of publicity about it. He got a lot of publicity
around the world about it, I suppose.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Mr. Minister, how much of a

But inside of Quebec, I would not say that this has, you know, pushed the Separatist Movement much further ahead than it did before.

What these things tend to do is confirm those who are in opposition even more; and those who are in support even more. It accents the polarization; but it does not seem to have -- from the surveys I have seen -- generated any appreciable shift in public opinion.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Mr. Minister, did the Canadian Government learn something from Belgium or, maybe, from Switzerland -- Belgium being bi-lingual and Switzerland being tri-lingual. Did they learn something from those parts?

MINISTER LALONDE: We have studied the Belgian system very extensively, particularly when we had, during the 1960's, the Royal Commission on Bi-Lingualism and Bi-Culturism. The Belgian system was extensively studied, but

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MEMBER OF THE PRESS. Mr. Manister, now amon of a sout of a poof from the reception he had in Paris?

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the Belgian approach was rejected as not being appropriate for Canada.

Well, I don't have to tell you that Belgium is a Unitary State. We are a Federal State. And the notion that we could divide the Public Service in kinds of parallel French and English Departments just appeared to be impractical for Canada.

make our Public Service at the Federal level evolve in terms of a capacity or capability of providing services in both languages by individuals who are in a situation where they are in contact with both language groups. These have been our efforts. This means, in effect, that all of the senior officers in the Public Service are becoming bi-lingual-or at least have what we call a passive capacity in both languages. That is, the capacity of being able to read and listen—if they don't have the capacity of communicating with the other language as much.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: What is the difference you see between the Canadian/Quebec situation, and the Brussels situation? We have 80% French speaking people in Brussels, and 20% Flemish people.

What is the difference-in your mind?

MINISTER LALONDE: Well, the size of the two

Countries is just so different that it is almost two

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MEMBER OF THE PRESS: We are dealing with Quebec, I suppose.

MINISTER LALONDE: Yes. In Quebec, you have 85% French and 15% English speaking. You have 5 million French and about 1 million English speaking people.

In Montreal, the proportion is about 20% English and 80% French. I suppose there is some kind of similarity -- or is it the reverse? I should say, rather, that the English speaking minority has a very prominent role and function in the business field. They are the minority. But in Brussels, it is the 80% French, you see.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Yes.

MINISTER LALONDE: But the Flemish are not the ones having the big jobs.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Yes. They have.

MINISTER LALONDE: Well, then, it is much more similar than I thought!

There are lots of similarities, in the sense that you have two very different linguistic groups having to live together and find a way of co-existing.

In our case -- in the case of Quebec -- what had to happen is that the majority of the people felt that they were being put down by the minority who were occupying a much larger role -- as I said -- in the areas of business and

you have two very different linguistic groups having to live

industry, and finance, generally. A lot of it has to do, therefore, with the pressure of a majority trying to get what it feels is a better shake out of the whole system than the one it has been getting traditionally, and resorting to the State it does control -- which is the Provincial Government in Quebec -- to try and achieve that upgrading of its capacity, of its achievements, economically and socially.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Does the Federal Government do something to improve the economic situation of people in Quebec?

MINISTER LALONDE: Yes. And not only in Quebec.

We have, also, in the Atlantic Provinces. We have had, over the last fifteen years -- and the last ten years in particular -- an extensive program called the Program of Regional Economic Expansion. We have a Special Minister responsible for Regional Economic Expansion. We have been developing policies over the last few years, trying to stimulate investment in high unemployment areas. This has applied to the whole of Eastern Canada, of which Quebec is a part.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Do you try to put French speaking people in those programs?

MINISTER LALONDE: Yes. One thing we have done -we cannot do much in terms of forcing any type of change
in the Private Sector, which comes under Provincial control
and regulation. But what we have been doing in the area of

sollies over ohe last few years, trying to stimulate invest MESTRER OF THE PRESS: So you try to put Brench

the Federal Civil Service -- which is our own operation -- has been a very definite policy of trying to encourage recruitment and promotion of French speaking people.

In 1948, the French speaking people were about 13% of the Public Service, while they were about 30% of the population; and most of them were concentrated in lower paid jobs.

Between 1968 and 1970, French speaking people were about 18% of the Public Service. Last year, the French speaking people were 26.6% of the Public Service-which is about equal to the percentage of the population in Canada.

And what has also happened, at the same time, is that you have had a very steady upgrading and increase in terms of the levels and the representations of the senior level of the Public Service. You still find areas where we are under-represented as French Canadians-but there has been a very, very significant shift over the last ten years. There is no doubt about that!

We have been trying to do that; and we have encouraged the Private Sector to do the same.

Things are evolving. But these things take time and, secondly, it always takes even longer for people to realize that it has happened!

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Isn't it also a question of

the Federal Civil Service . which is our own operation has been a very definite policy of trying to encourage recruitment and promotion or French specials people.

15% of the Public Service, while they were about 50% of the population: and most of them were concentrated in lower paid

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education? The French speaking people are not in the top force. There must be a reason for that. Is there any change in that regard -- in higher education?

MINISTER LALONDE: There are two reasons.

One reason has been the traditional Anglo-Saxon or English-speaking Establishment, which tended to recruit itself from inside, and without reaching out into the French community.

The other reason is the one you mentioned, indeed, which is the fault of the French speaking community, itself, whereby historically, we were a society which was oriented towards Agriculture and the traditional professions. And it is only in this century, and after the First World War, really, that French Canadians started really getting into Engineering, and Commerce, and this type of thing. We started producing a lot of people -- scientists -- a lot of people who could really be critical in terms of an Industrial society. And you had a larger organization, also, of the French speaking society during that period, which shifted completely from an Agricultural society to an Industrial society.

So these shifts have taken place between, as I said, 1920 and 1960.

But the fact is, as you mentioned, that part of the blame is on the French speaking community itself-- because

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of its socio-cultural values and orientation. But that has changed; and that has not been the fact since 1950.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Are you starting a new subject matter, or is this a follow-up?

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: No. This is another question.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Do you want to say something?

ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE PRESS: My only question was:

What was the inference of General de Gaulle.

MINISTER LALONDE: What was his inference?

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Inference, yes --

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Yes, when he was Vice Pequiste

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Influence. Influence!

MINISTER LALONDE: Influence! Oh! I think it was substantial. I think it was substantial-and significant.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: He did not make the Cabinet people aware of it.

MINISTER LALONDE: Somewhat!

MINISTER LALONDE: In 1967?

[Laughter]

Obviously, it was quite a bomb shell to drop on any Country; and it awoke—it generated—a lot of antagonism and animosity; and I don't think it was a positive development—in terms of what we have been trying to achieve in Canada.

I think it generated antagonism; and negative views about what the French speaking people were trying to achieve. It has not

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been a step forward in the whole process of development of better relationships between French and English speaking Canadians in Canada, and a better deal for French speaking I think it has made the job harder for those of us who are trying to make it work better inside of Canada, between the two Countries. I think the global, total effect of this has been negative.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: How was it received by the English people in Canada?

MINISTER LALONDE: They were mad as hell! This was considered as, you know, a straight insult to our Country.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Is it still resented? MINISTER LALONDE: I am sure nobody has elevated a monument to de Gaulle, yet, in English-speaking Canada; and nobody expects that to happen.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: I understand that quite a few business firms are moving their Headquarters, especially from Montreal

MINISTER LALONDE: Right.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Which means that the whole trend of economic activity is moving westward.

How do you see that affecting the political status of Mr. Levesque?

MINISTER LALONDE: First of all, the movement started

. MINISTER LALDWOES Right,

phenomenon; and it is not the result of purely political factors. There are some economic factors that have been at play for a while, in that respect. Some are even moving to Calgary and Vancouver -- something like what is done in the United States. But there is no doubt -- there is no doubt at all -- that this movement has been accelerated since the event of the offers of Separatist Government in Quebec.

This is a serious cause of concern to us.

We have been talking to business people; trying to convince them that, really, this is not something that they should do for political reasons. If they have good economic reasons to do it, well, that can be understood; but they should not do it for political reasons.

It is not helping Mr. Levesque -- contrary to whatever he may say. People are concerned in Quebec! They are perceiving the economic impact--or the economic effects of this; and people don't like it!

Unemployment in Quebec has been going up faster than it has gone in the rest of Canada in the last two years. It has gone up faster in Montreal than it has in the rest of Quebec. So these are serious developments that are a source of concern to us--and I am sure are a source of concern to Mr. Levesque, himself.

He may be whistling in the dark as much as he

before Mr. Levesque came into office. It is not a new phenomener, and it is not the result of nursly political.

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wishes about it--and put on a brave face in the face of this-but I am sure this is something that is not helping his cause.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: As a follow-up, does this mean that Mr. Levesque will try to push his referendum earlier than would otherwise be the case?

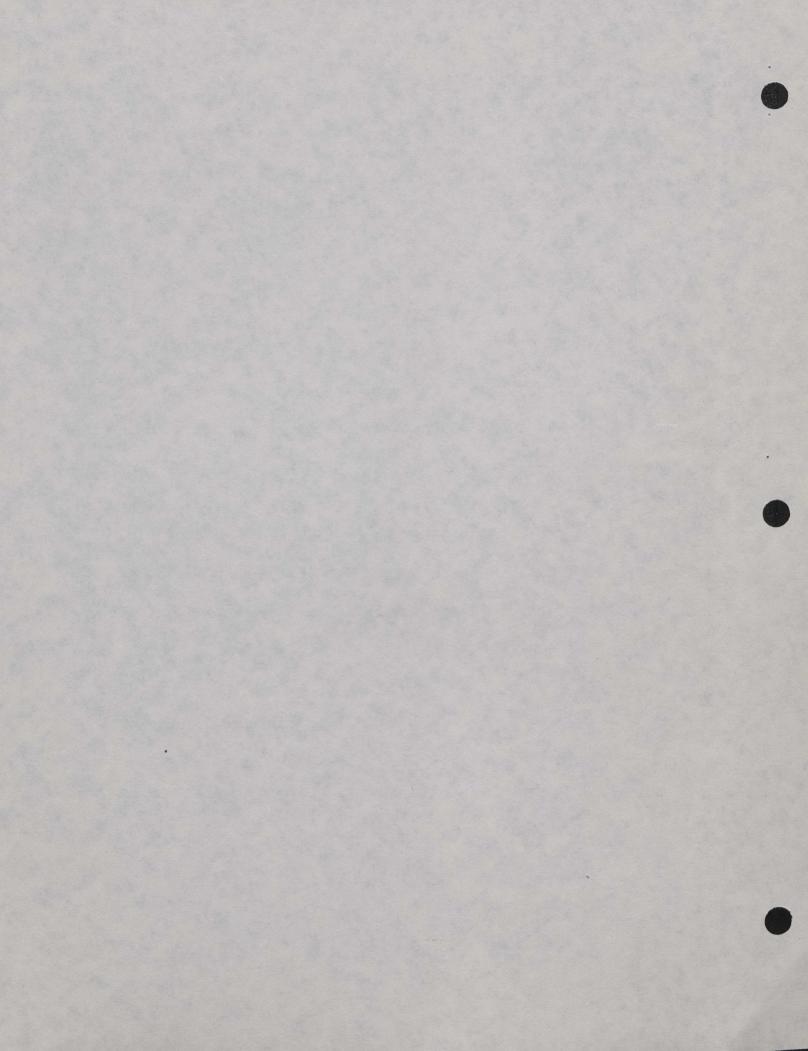
MINISTER LALONDE: I would wish that that would be the case. We have been pressing him to have his referendum as soon as possible, because of developments like this. As long as uncertainties are going to be entertained and maintained, they are going to have negative effects, on Quebec, in connection with Quebec's economy.

I think more and more people are realizing this; but it does not seem that he is going to be in a position to have his referendum before some time next year. I am afraid that we will still have to live for a year in that atmosphere.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: You mentioned the influence of the de Gaulle statement. When Mr. Levesque was in Paris, he was received by President Giscard d'Estaing.

What does the Government of Canada do to talk to the Covernment of France, in order to at least get a little more understanding -- if not support?

MINISTER LALONDE: Well, we have good and regular contacts with the Government of France. Our Embassy is in



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regular contact. Our Embassy in Paris is in regular contact with the French Government, and the French Ambassador in Ottawa is in close contact with us.

There are also quite a number of direct contacts on the political level taking place.

The French Government has expressed its view succinctly, in the Statement of Non-Interference and Non-Indifference, and it is understandable that the French Government should not be indifferent to the situation.

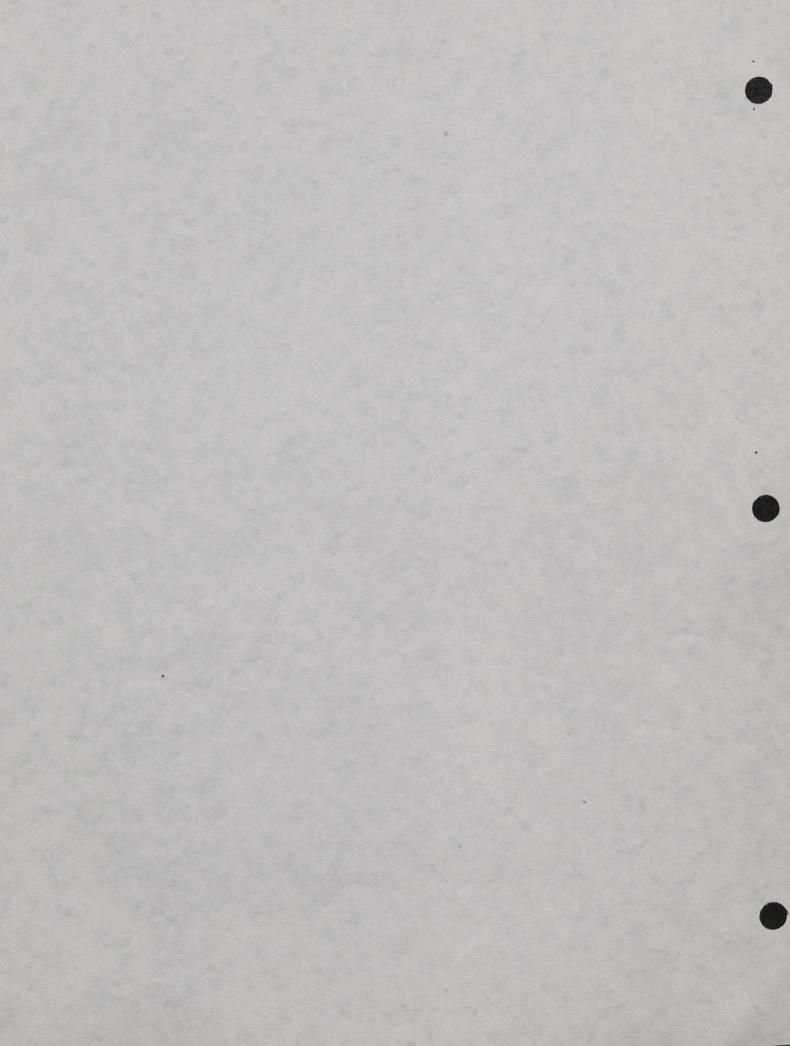
As long as they are respecting the Canadian Constitution, we are not opposed—on the contrary—to a close relationship between the Government of Quebec and the Government of France. But it has to be done under our Constitutional rules; and the French Government has to respect those rules! We are watching this carefully, and when we are concerned that there might be trespassing, we draw it to their attention.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Would you expect less support and encouragement for the Pequiste on the part of a Leftist Government in France?

MINISTER LALONDE: I would say "Yes".

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Still one more question about this "economic" side.

Has this controversy about Quebec affected immigration to Canada and, if so: How?



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immigration into Canada. Immigration in Canada has been affected, mainly because of the general economic condition; and the question should be whether the economic condition has been affected by the political situation—to which I would say, "Yes". "It has been, somewhat." It is hard to put a figure on it but it has not been an indifferent factor.

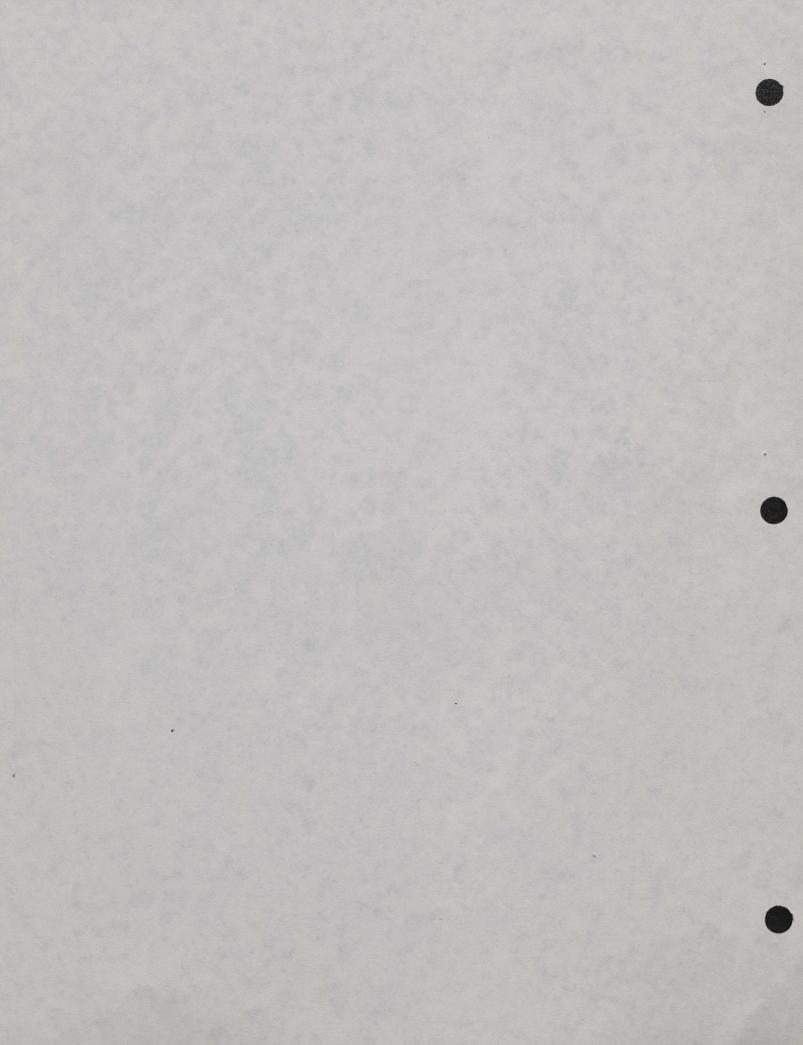
I would say in terms of direct impact on immigration -- "No". It is related to the general economic situation. People are going to migrate to Canada if they find they can have a job, and a ready job. We are going to admit them if there is a job available.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS. Do you have less French-speaking people coming to Canada, and more other people, since there is this kind of struggle?

MINISTER LALONDE: I could not tell you that there has been any appreciable difference, one way or another. This has not changed the balance of immigration in any appreciable way. No.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Sir, in light of the strong economic relations between Canada and the U.S., the National question of Quebec is, obviously, a question for the United States Government, too.

Could you share with us your impression of the
American view of this situation as a possible consequence



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on the economic consequences?

MINISTER LALONDE: Obviously, the fate of Canada cannot be indifferent to the United States; but I think the U.S. Government has taken a very correct and proper attitude on this.

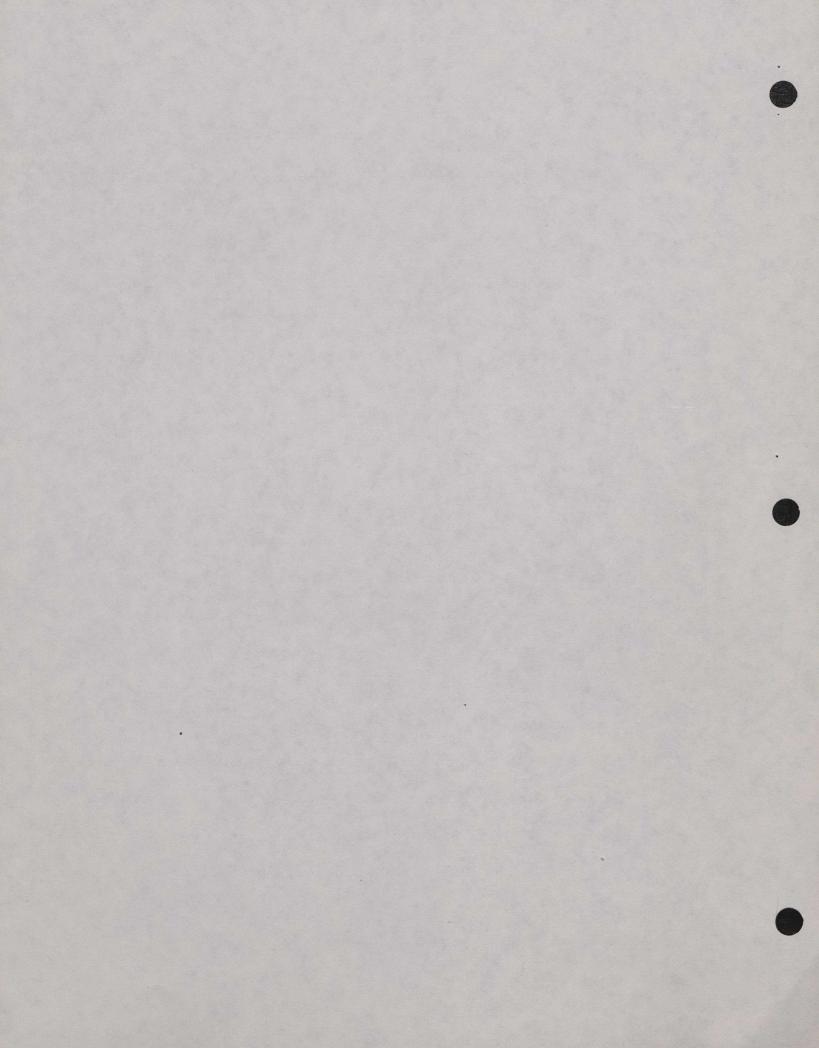
The President has indicated that, obviously, his personal preference is for a united Canada. But this is a matter for Canadians to decide, and we don't expect the American Government to interfere in that debate, or necessarily take sides. This is a matter that has to be resolved between Canadians.

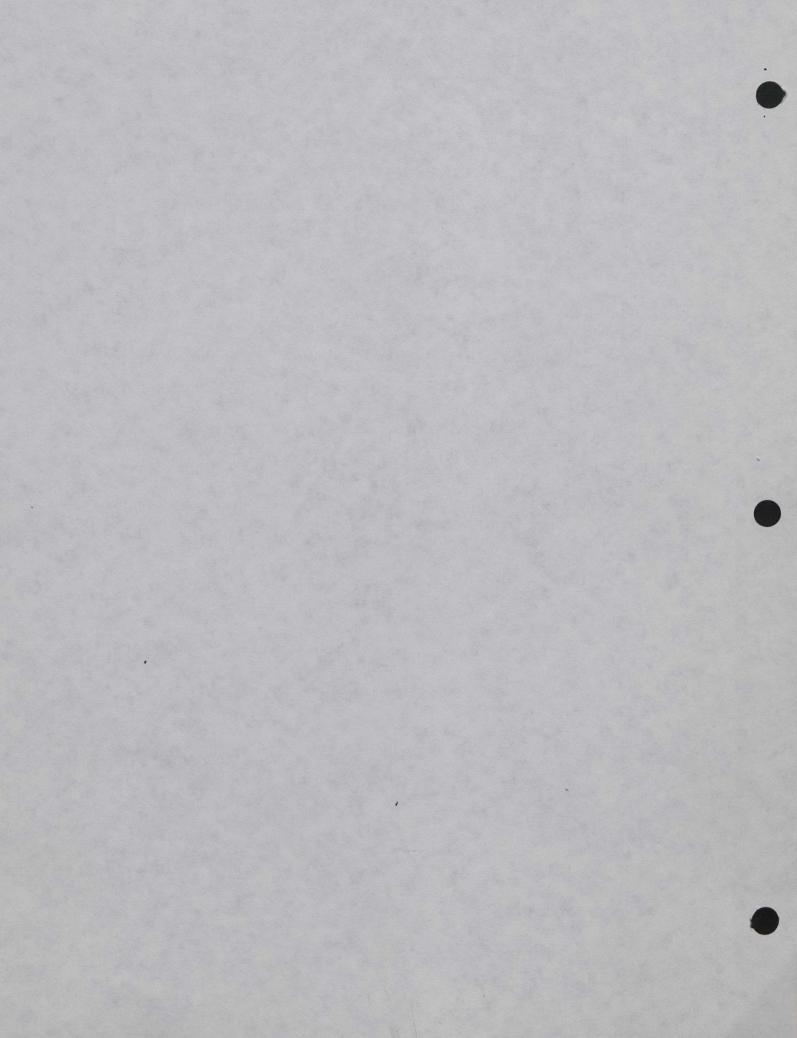
I think it will be resolved all the better between Canadians if it is left to Canadians to resolve. I think this is understood by the American Administration very well.

The posture adopted by the American Government is one with which we have no difficulty at all.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Do you have any terrorist activity, now, in Canada?

MINISTER LALONDE: We have had none since 1970. As you remember, we took very, very strong steps at that time; and I think we have been proven right in the attitude of non-negotiation and the very strong measures taken at the time. Nothing has happened, since, in terms of terrorists' acts, and we keep touching wood that none will happen.





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MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Mr. Minister, Prime Minister

Trudeau created some furor in the news by saying that he

would use force to prevent Quebec from seceding.

Was he being serious -- or was it just political showmanship tactics?

If he used force, would that be Constitutional?

MINISTER LALONDE: Well, again, I think what the problem is is that our Embassy has not re-circulated to you enough of what, exactly, the Prime Minister did say in that interview.

This was in a television interview, and he was asked a hypothetical question, which was: Assuming that even if Mr. Levesque does not win his referendum, assuming that he declares independence unilaterally and he takes over the Airports, and the Post Offices, and things like that; what are you going to do, Mr. Prime Minister?

So the Prime Minister answered: "If, against the will of the majority of the people of Quebec, the Provincial Government acts illegally to achieve its purpose in that way, I will not hesitate to use the sword." Which is to say that he is going to see to it that the law of the land is going to be respected, even by a Provincial Government! Obviously, that would be completely illegal. He was asked what he would do against a Government that would act illegally and would attack the basic Constitution of the Country; and

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But, in effect, any energies toward political change that may have existed have all been channeled, including democratic processes, it seems, and I hope it will go on that way. But we have had no incident that I can remember since 1970.

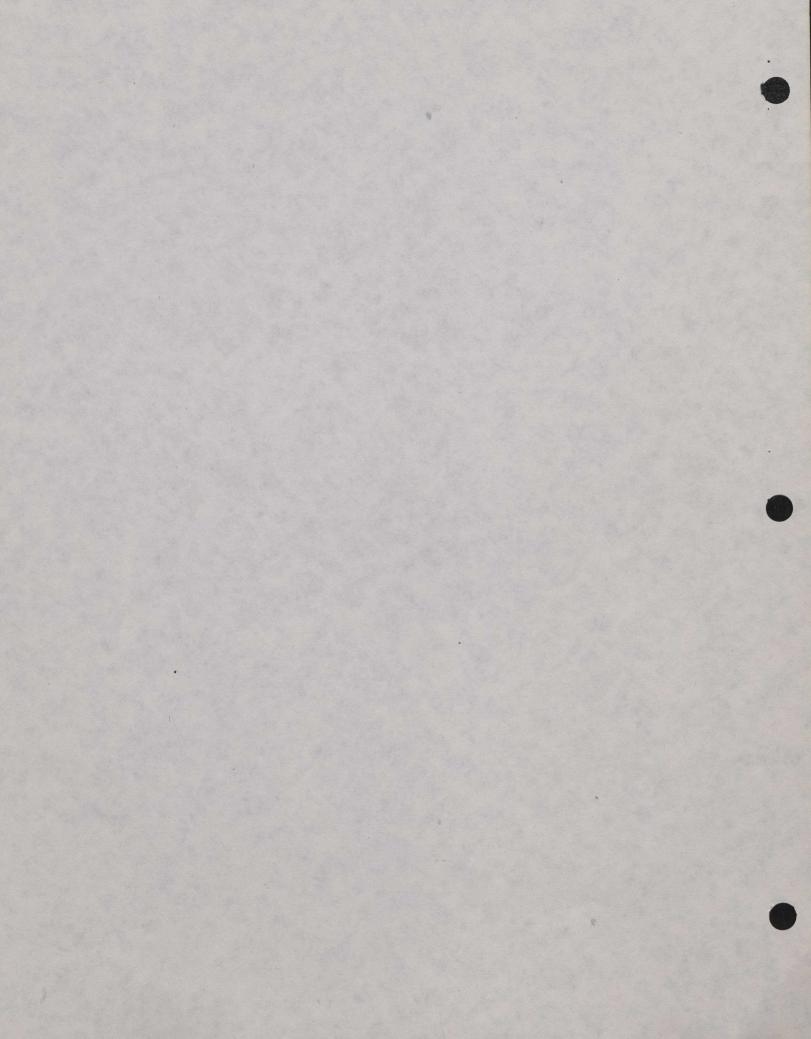
MEMBER OF THE PRESS: You don't feel there will be any if the referendum fails to pass?

MINISTER LALONDE: I can only hope that there will not be any. You know, it is like asking me whether there will not be acts of violence if the referendum is won.

There may be some people, or groups -- small groups -- taking the law in their own hands, maybe. But, you know, when you look around the world, you see the call of terrorism in various Countries; and sometimes you wonder, why. But, then, it does take place.

I think there has been a lot of education, through the whole process during the last seven years, since those terrorist acts in Quebec. We have to play the rules of the game, and I can only hope that once the rules of the game have been obeyed, people will be ready to abide by the results.

I cannot guarantee it, but what I can tell you is that, at the present time, I see no evidence of a resurgence of terrorist activities -- or support for any kind of terrorism.



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that is what he said.

He also said, clearly, that if the expressed will of a substantial majority of people in Quebec was to leave, he would not use force.

He would quit, but he would not use force.

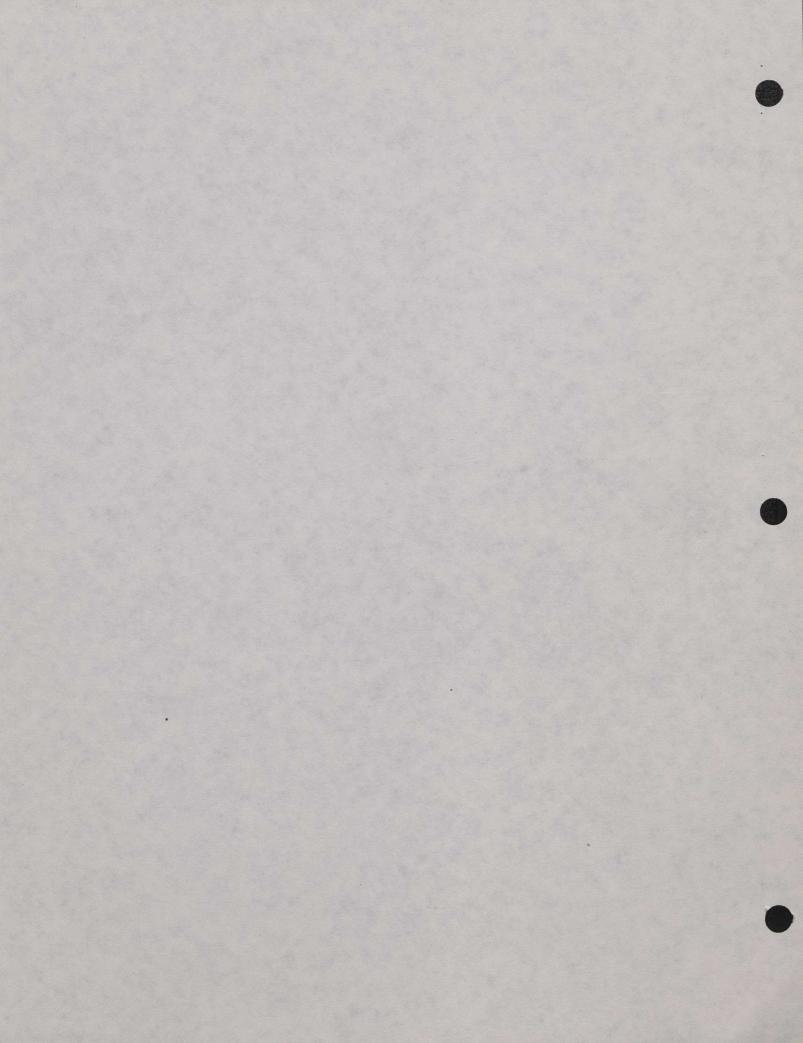
MEMBER OF THE PRESS: What would be the strategy of the Federal Government, just to avert Mr. Levesque's strategy?

MINISTERLALONDE: The first one is to keep cool.

Secondly, in the first year, it is to let some of the steam go out; allow time for the bloom to come off of that particular government, and the honeymoon, and all the emotions around this new government to wither down a little bit; and to address ourselves directly to the people of Quebec and the people in the rest of Canada, to explain to them what changes are taking place, and what changes are needed, and show to the people, over the next year, that the will of the Federal Government in particular -- and the rest of the Country -- is ready to entertain changes and accomodations which would insure not only the survival but the expansion and the flowering of the French language and culture in Canada, generally.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: What is the purpose of your visit here?

MINISTER LALONDE: I have been invited by the



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REPRODUCTION RIGHTS PHONE (202) 347-0224 24 Foreign Review for a meeting. They wanted me to deliver a speech; but I decided I did not have time to draft a speech, but that I would come and meet with them.

We had a session with the Journalists this morning. That is about it.

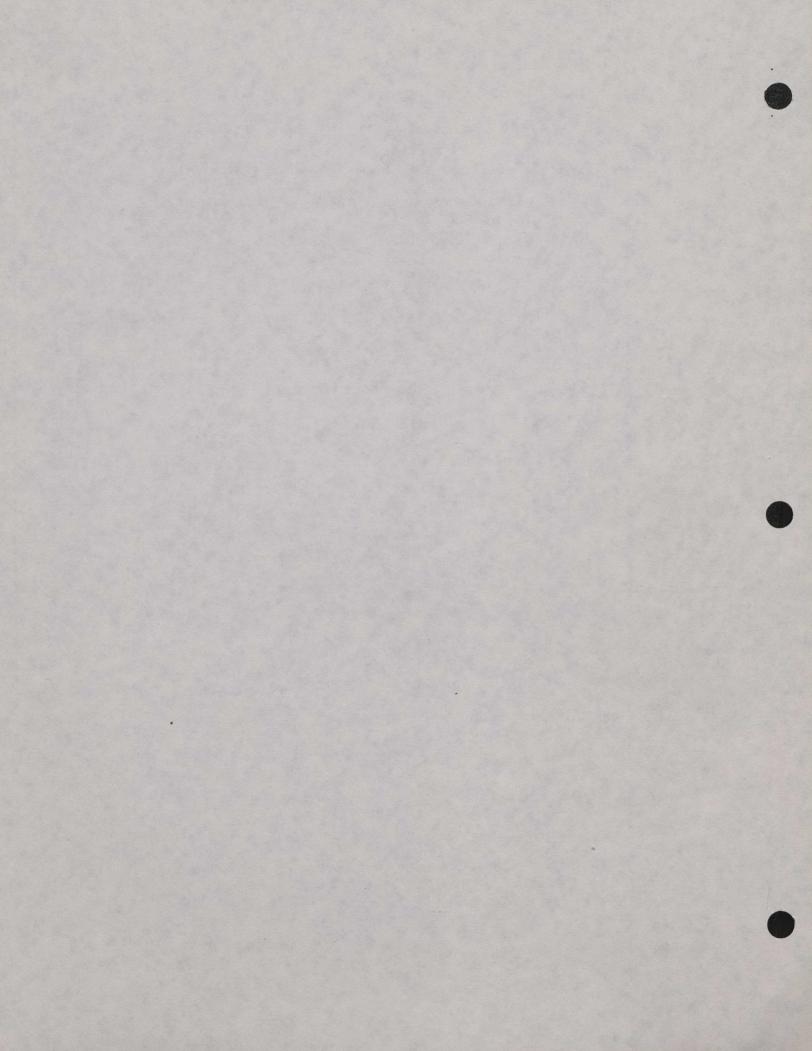
MR. FEICHTLBAUER: In connection with the slogan; "Sovereignty Association", it has been argued that Mr. Levesque could promise only one thing but, as the Sovereignty -- not the Association -- isn't it so that in reality, there would be no alternative to some sort of a Federation configuration -- whatever you call it -if Quebec would separate from the rest of Canada?

Isn't it possible that the other Provinces will say, "Now you are gone. Stay out. We don't want to have anything to do with you any more."

MINISTER LALONDE: First of all, Mr. Levesque and we agree on one thing, which is that you have to make up your mind whether you are going to be independent, or whether you are going to live in a Federal system. There is no half way house. You cannot be a quasi-Federal State.

What they have been saying is not quite clear. They say all kinds of things according to who is speaking; and even according to the people they are speaking to.

I have heard some of their spokesmen say that they would want to negotiate this in parallel. That is,



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sovereignty and association at the same time. They would not have to become totally independent, but they would work out something where they would be, at the same time, "independent" and associated."

I don't know how they would work that out; but that is their problem!

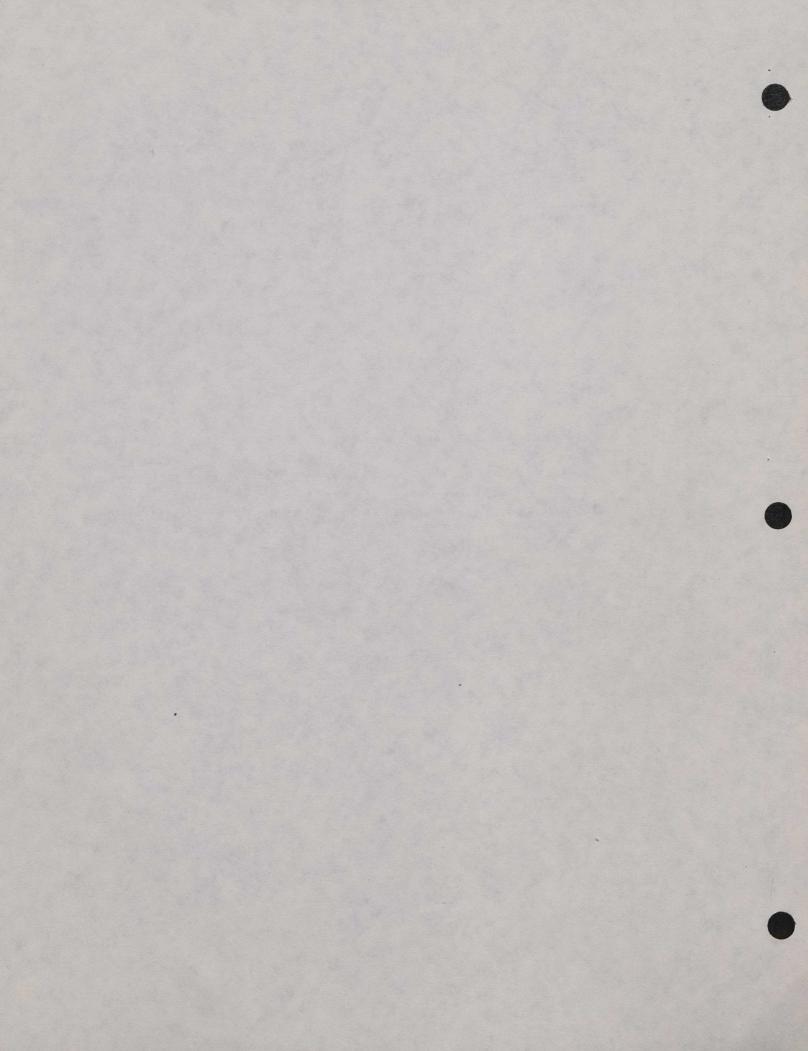
Let's assume that a referendum would be held and the "Sovereignty Association" would win. There is no doubt, at all, that the rest of Canada, at the present time, or in a year's time, would say, "No way"! Again: "Make up your mind! If you want to be independent, you be independent! If you want to be associated, well, it isn't in a Federal context."

Mr. Levesque would be called to return to his people and say, "I thought I could get an association.

I cannot get it. So I ask you whether we should be separate or not".

And I am convinced -- and whatever happened over the last 15 years reinforces me in that conviction -- there is no way the people of Quebec want separation or total independence. Once the cards are on the table and they know what the choices are, they are not going to go for that.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Can you give us the feelings of the English people towards these kinds of feelings of the



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French Quebeckers?

MINISTER LALONDE: Well, the surveys indicate that the overwhelming view is against it but, at the same time, the majority of the people are of the view that if the people of Quebec were, in a democratic way, to decide to leave, we should not use force to keep them with Canada.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Which would leave us where?

MINISTER LALONDE: It leaves us in the situation where I am convinced that-both in Quebec and outside of Quebec-the people are going to hope to stay together.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: You cannot have just one State -- one of the ten States -- just indefinite --

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Is there any danger that other Provinces might say, "All right. Let's be independent. Let's go our own way. Let's break up."

MINISTER LALONDE: "Let's go our own way?"

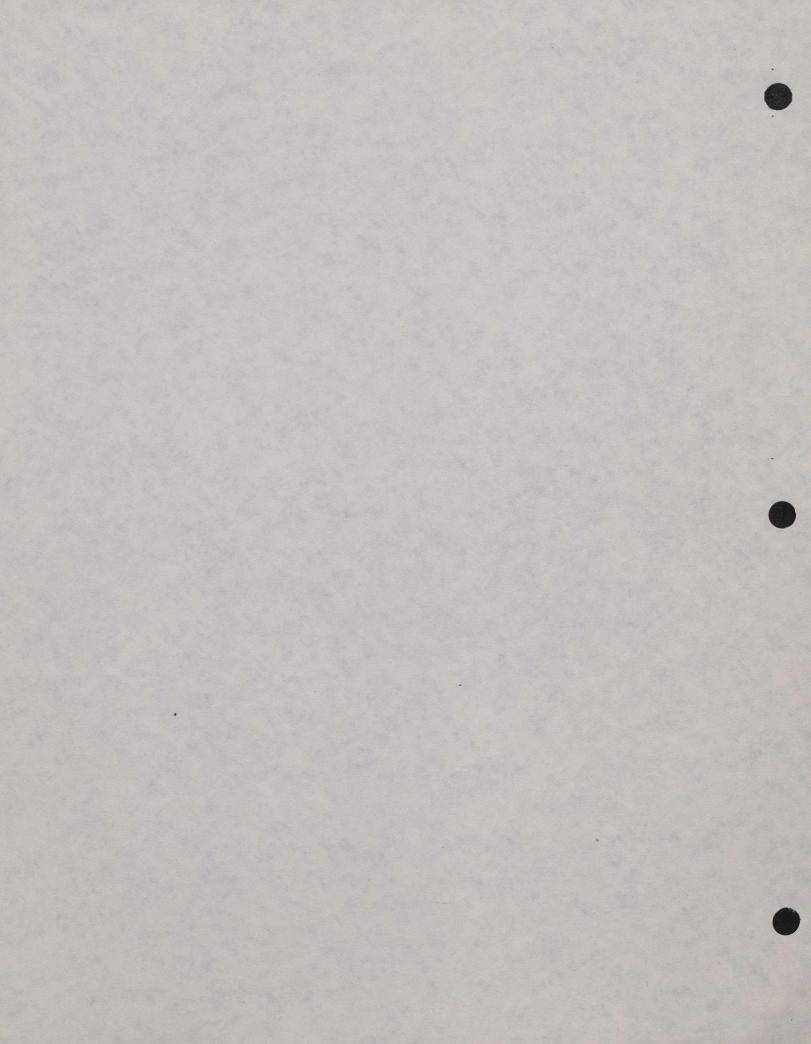
No. There is no serious threat of that.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Will the Maritime areas be able to survive like Alaska?

MINISTER LALONDE: That is a good comparison!

I only wish they would strike oil like Alaska. That would help!

But the Maritime areas have been striking fish lately. There is a good future in the Fishing Industry there--



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since we have the 100-mile limit. I don't know, frankly, how they would manage! They are very concerned that it would be-- not like Alaska--but like Bangladesh! So they are very opposed to any such development.

But, again, I think we are looking at very dark scenarios; and we seem to be painting the worst possible picture. I don't see it.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: If we keep that picture, could they, possibly, go with Quebec?

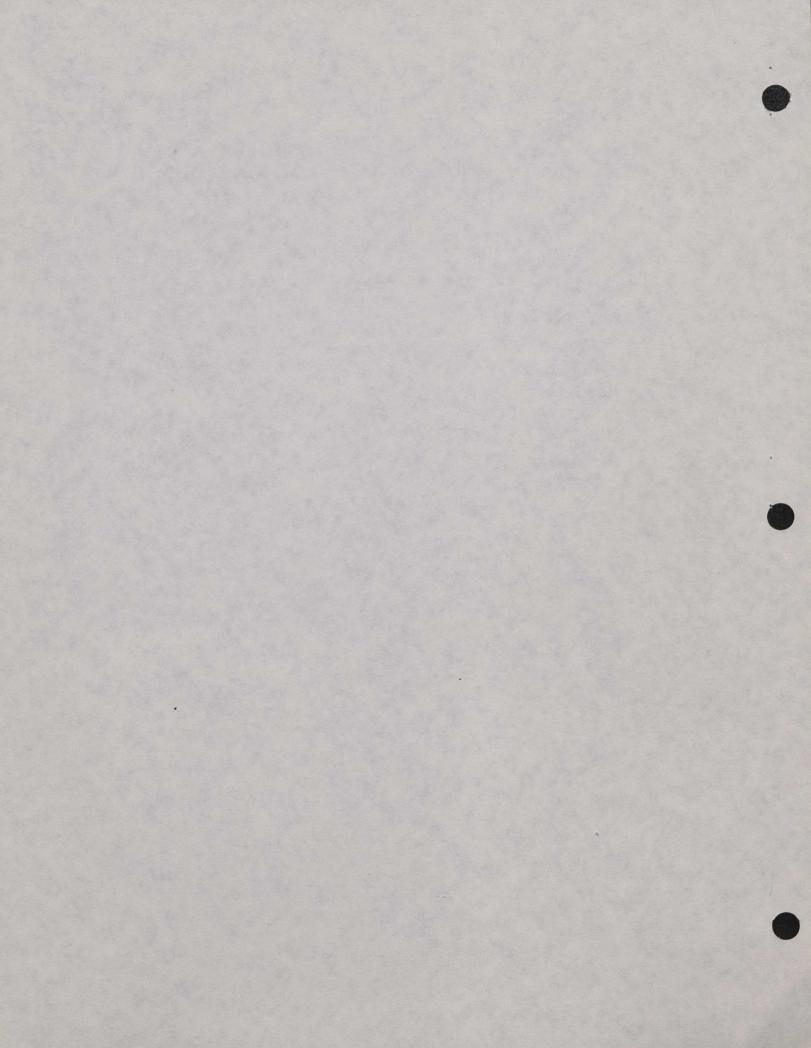
MINISTER LALONDE: No! At best, a small part of
New Brunswick could go with Quebec, which is about half of
it, which is Acadia--where the Acadians are--which is a
French speaking population. But all of the rest is English
speaking. They would not go with Quebec. Definitely not!

I think they would go with Maine before going with Quebec.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Is that a possibility?

MINISTER LALONDE: Not a serious one. I don't think so. Again, unless Maine were to strike oil and agree to share it with the Maritimes. I don't see this as any great likelihood. I think they have a long tradition of being Canadians. I don't think they would receive very substantial economic advantages in doing this.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: In the case of Separatism, what would the French community do inside of the English



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Provinces?

MINISTER LALONDE: Oh, they would be even more quickly assimilated than they have been in the past. That is a pretty obvious development. Some individuals might move into Quebec but people will not move for linguistic reasons if there is no job. So, in practice, there would be no population movement into Quebec. I don't see thisat all.

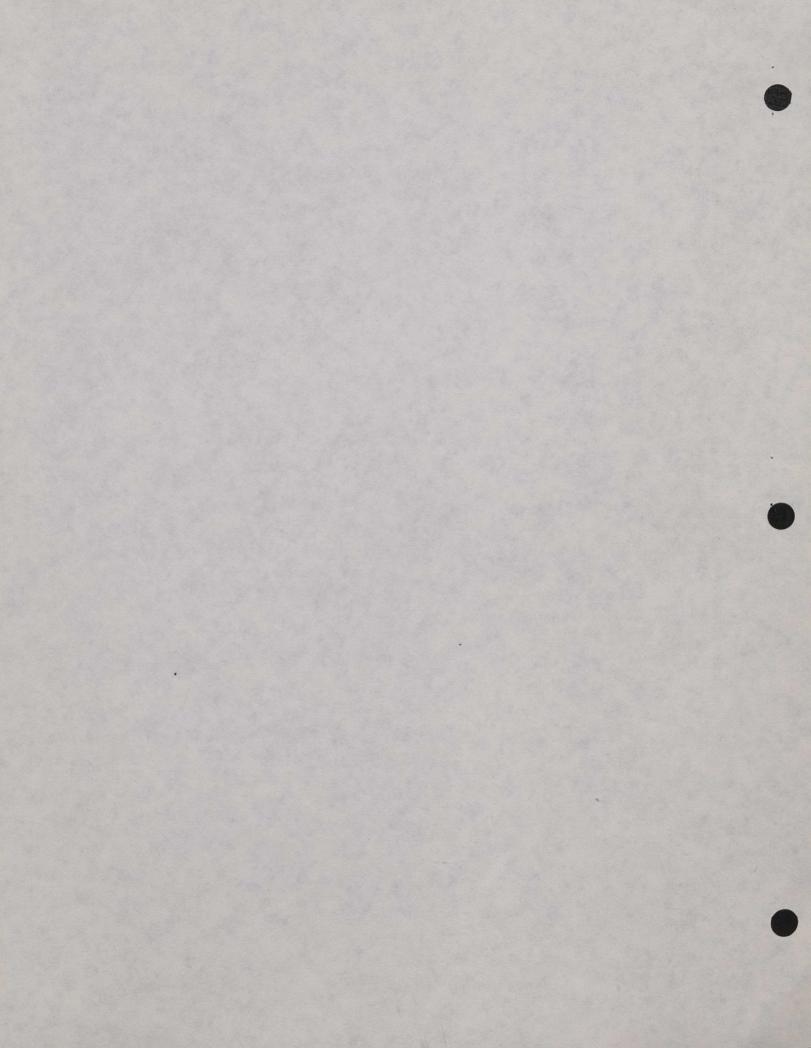
There would be assimilation. Mind you, assimilation has been taking place substantially in a lot of areas; but I think the process would be accelerated very substantially.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Mr. Minister, I understand there are quite a few moves to have a Constitutional reform to accomodate the French speaking people.

MINISTER LALONDE: Right!

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Could you please tell us what the situation is on that front, and what is in your mind, and is this the will of the English speaking people to do this?

MINISTER LALONDE: We are equipping ourselves with a Federal Referendum Legislation, ourselves. I will be introducing a Bill on the subject during the course of this year-in order to be able to retaliate vis-a-vis the Quebec referendum--if necessary.



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Secondly, we intend to make a certain number of Constitutional proposals, this year, which will deal, essentially, with the areas under Federal responsibility at the present time.

We cannot, in practice, amend the Constitution in the areas affecting the Provinces, without their consent.

And the Quebec government has indicated that they are not interested in negotiating any deal except independence, or the Sovereignty Association—which we are not ready to entertain, and we will not entertain, ever!

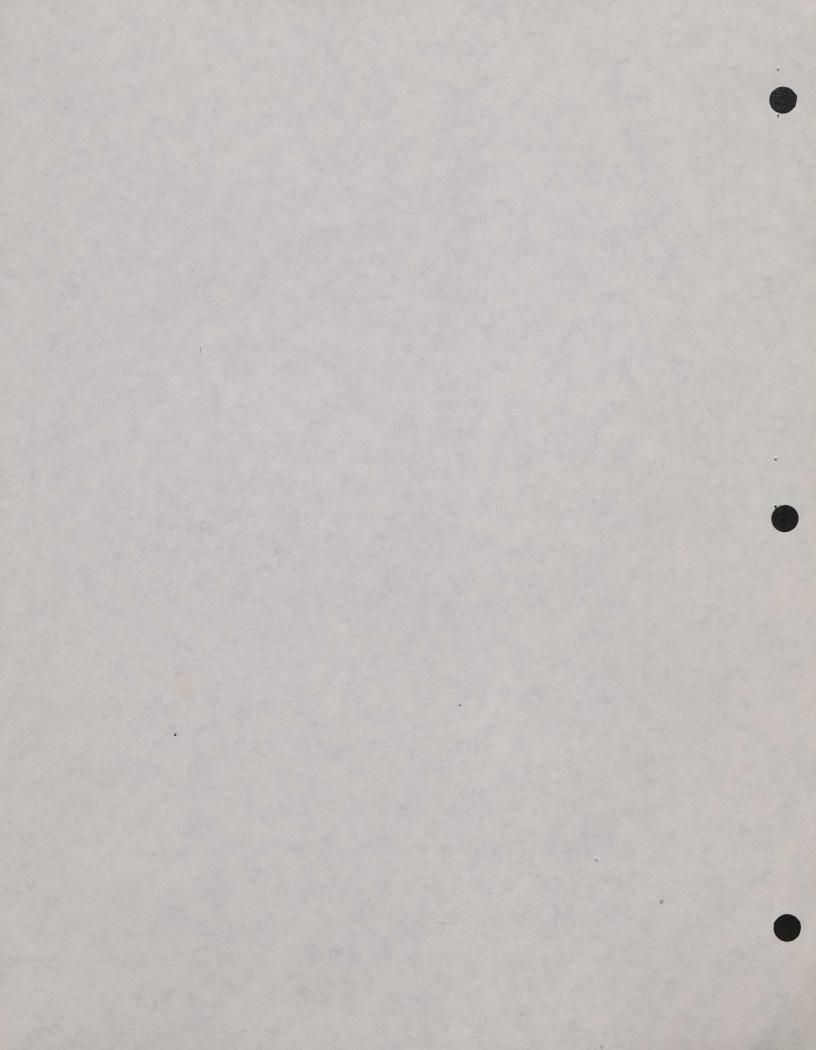
So what we intend to do, during the next phase, is to put forward a certain number of proposals where we can amend and change the situation.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: The Supreme Court?

MINISTER LALONDE: The Supreme Court. The Senate might be another area that is possible. The Charter of Human Rights in Canada; and a certain number of other provisions, inside of the Constitution, affecting the Federal authority.

But as far as the distribution of power, itself, is concerned--between the Federal and the Provincial authorities--this would require some kind of an agreement between the Provinces and the Federal Government; and this is not forthcoming at the present time.

So there are things we can do which will show to



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the people of Quebec, and the French Canadians, that we are flexible as a Federal Government and, secondly, that the Federal Government is willing to make accommodations.

Then there would be a second phase-once either, the Quebec Government has lost its referendum or, again, once they have lost Office and we have a Federalist Party and Office in Quebec.

Then we can try to negotiate a global deal on a new Constitutional Agreement.

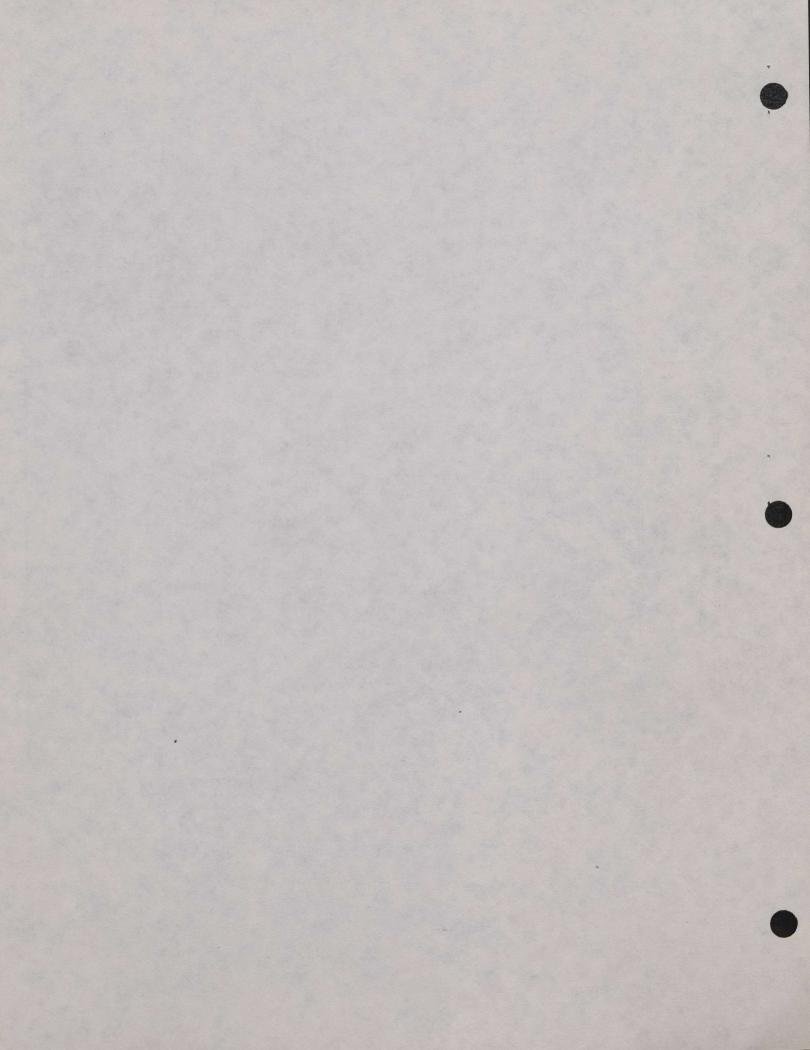
It is a two-phase operation.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Do you think these rules would be enough to reduce the political clout of the Parti Quebecois?

MINISTER LALONDE: Not completely, at all, because, as
I indicated--I think at the beginning--the factors involved
are not purely Constitutional or legalistic, or even linguistic.
They are of a socio-economic nature; and these will take
a longer time to resolve.

It is a question of insuring the economic promotion of the French speaking community in the Private Sector, making sure that it feels that it has, really, equality of opportunity; not only that it has it-but it feels that it has it! And it will feel this only when it has had it for a good while.

Again, it takes time for people to perceive these things!



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So, I think, the problem is with us in Canada for quite a few years down the line. I think we can resolve the most contentious areas. We can certainly lower the pressure by action that is going to take place and develop-in our Country-greater acceptance by the French speaking people of our situation as French speaking people that are a minority that will not feel squeezed, but, on the contrary, will feel welcome and supportive.

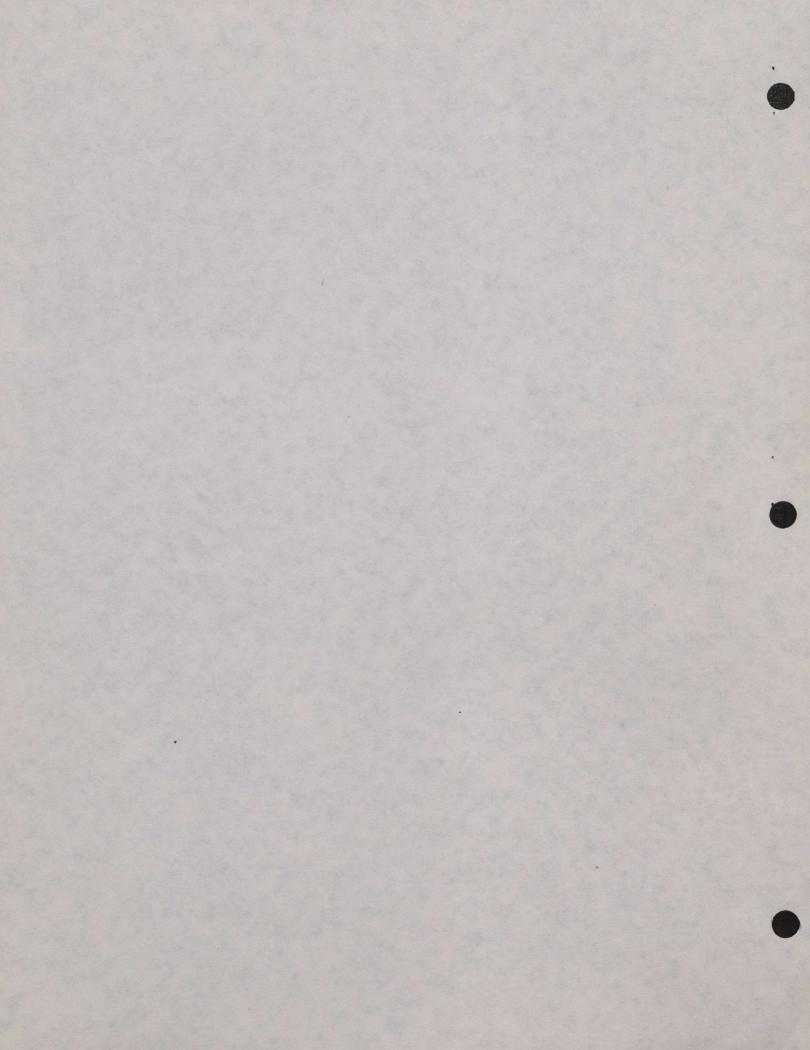
That is the type of socio-economic, cultural, type of mentality that you have to develop; and that is not something that the Government alone can do. And you cannot legislate that, tomorrow morning. It is an evolution in Society that has to take place after a lot of arguments; and a lot of pressures; and adaptations; and accommodations. That is down the line for several years.

MEMBER OF THE PRESS: Would the Government--the Federal Government--help the position of Mr. Levesque, for instance.

MINISTER LALONDE: They don't need our help!

They are doing pretty well, themselves, by now. I think it might be counter-productive--even if we were to do it.

You know, we will help, as a Federal Government, the movements--the volunteer organizations that are anti-separatists--but, as far as the Provincial political parties are concerned, they are doing pretty well on their own, now,



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and I don't think direct intervention of the Federal Government would be very helpful. In fact, it might be counter-productive!

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: It is customary in the National Press Club to close with a funny question.

I am not going to adopt this custom, and I am not going to ask a funny question. But I am going to ask a question which it may be funny to expect you to answer it.

When will the Federal Government call for National Elections?

MINISTER LALONDE: I will answer you very seriously. I will give you the ultimate date, which is July 8, 1979 -- that is the ultimate date.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Could it be any time before that?

MINISTER LALONDE: It could be any time before that.

MR. FEICHTLBAUER: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister for being with us.

Thank you very much for coming.

Thank you for your candid and frank answers.

[Applause]

[Whereupon, at approximately 3:30 p.m. the Press Briefing was concluded.]

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Breakfast interview with the
Honorable Marc Lalonde, Minister of
State for Federal/Provincial
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