

MEETING THE MEDIA

On more than one occasion, President Kuchma addressed reporters directly stating that even though official discussions and agreements were important, he knew that the manner in which events were reported by the media could have equally serious consequences. The accompanying media entourage from Ukraine (see bottom photo) confirmed that, at home and abroad, this President displayed a keen understanding of the importance of media. "Ask me questions," he urged the reporters surrounding him, "and I will answer them."

... FINAL WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Excerpts from an interview by the Canada-Ukraine Monitor with President Kuchma in Winnipeg just prior to his departure from Canada:

"I would like to say honestly and openly that my encounters with Ukrainians here in Canada have given me great pleasure, and that this experience has influenced my own perspective. As we often say, it is better to see something once than to hear about it a hundred times.

I have felt that there is a desire in the Ukrainian community here to help Ukraine get on her feet, and not merely through promises. I can see that serious political and economic work is being done here in Canada to convince the Canadian government to turn a favourable eye towards Ukraine. The Ukrainian diaspora has been putting forth proposals, and up to now we have been the ones declining many of the things that you have been offering to do. I feel that we have a good mutual understanding. In Ukraine we must now have less of that bureaucracy about which I have had so many complaints from everyone with whom I have met.

I am convinced that 1995 will be the deciding year for Ukraine's future, especially the first half - everything will change. Truly, as they say, the world has turned around; let us hope that it will be turning in our favour."

Were your expectations in Canada achieved?

"Even more than I anticipated! And so, as it always is when you are parting with good friends, there is a weight on your heart ... I regret that everything passed so quickly."



All photos: MONITOR