The petitioners point out that the Conservative Government had no mandate from the Canadian people to conclude a free trade agreement with the United States, that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) promised during the course of the bilateral trade negotiations that Canadian sovereignty would not be compromised, but the trade agreement negotiated by the Government threatens the very fabric of Canadian political and economic sovereignty by removing the power of the Canadian Government to effectively control foreign ownership, to develop Canadian energy resources in the best interests of Canadians and to equalize opportunities between the regions.

Since the proposed trade agreement would deny Canada the policy freedom to determine its own economic future and undermine our ability to build a society distinct from that of the United States, the petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to dissolve and allow the people of Canada the opportunity to accept or reject the proposed free trade agreement during a national general election.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I have a petition to present. It is signed by residents of Ontario and is with respect to the trade agreement with the United States.

The petitioners say that whereas the Conservative Government did not have a mandate to conclude such an agreement, whereas the agreement would deny Canada policy freedom in the future to shape its own economic course and whereas the agreement did not succeed in achieving the secure access to the U.S. market that was the key objective, and instead threatens the loss of hundreds of thousands of Canadian jobs, the petitioners call upon Parliament to give the people of Canada a chance to accept or reject this agreement in a national general election.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 157 and 223.

[*Text*]

EXPENSES OF NATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Question No. 157—**Mr. Parry:**

1. Since the initiation of the Native Economic Development Program to March 31, 1987, were any funds from its annual budgets expended as administration and/or "overhead" expenses and, if so, what was the (*a*) total amount (*b*) percentage of total disbursements under the program this represented?

2. As of June 5, 1987, for the fiscal year 1987-88, what were the (*a*) budgeted (*b*) allocated figures for administration and/or "overhead" expenses (*c*) program disbursements?

3. Will (*a*) budget (*b*) allocation reductions be made to the program in 1987-88 and, if so, when will the government confirm this to the board of directors?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): 1. For the Native Economic Development Program, all operating costs such as administration and/or "overhead" expenses are a charge to the original $345 million allocation for the program.

(a) The total amount of Native Economic Development Program funds expended from its annual budgets as administration and/or "overhead" expenses was $17.1 million from the initiation of the program to March 31, 1987.

(b) This figure (17.1 million) represents 21.7 per cent of the total program disbursements to March 31, 1987.

2. (a) Part III of the 1987-88 Estimates for the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion provide projected requirements approved by Parliament of $1 million for grants and $75,224,000 for contributions to be made under the Native Economic Development Program. Funds required in 1987-88 for administration and/or "overhead" expenses have been determined at an additional $5.5 million. This figure represents the over-all requirement for non-salary operating costs and was reported to and approved by the Native Economic Development Board at its meeting on June 10-11, 1987.

(b) Ordinarily, allocations relating to the management of personnel or the administration of government programs which have not been expended are not disclosed to the public. A full and public accounting is made at the end of each fiscal year.

(c) As of June 5, 1987, for the fiscal year 1987-88, disbursements for operating expenditures were $264,000 and $556,000 for grants and contributions.

3. (a) A Budget reductions are not planned for the Native Economic Development Program in 1987-88.

(b) A financial report indicating any budgetary adjustments that might occur is tabled at every Native Economic Development Board meeting.

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN EMPLOYED BY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Question No. 223—**Mr. Howie:**

As of the last date for which information is available, what proportion of the employees of the Department of Agriculture were women?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): As of November 7, 1987, 28 per cent of the employees of the Department of Agriculture were women.

[*English*]

Mr. Hawkes: I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.