

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

The Minister for International Trade said a North American free trade agreement could be concluded in March. All discussions have taken place behind closed doors. Canadians do not know what is going on. We do not know whether the government intends to consult the public or how it intends to ratify the agreement.

What do the Prime Minister and his government intend to do about consulting the public on this agreement and about ratifying the agreement?

*[English]*

**Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science):** Mr. Speaker, what the minister said was that there was some hope you might have a draft agreement by some time in March. He has always said: "The sooner we can get some kind of a draft agreement the better off we will be". There is no intention whatsoever of attempting to have an agreement that is not ratified by Parliament.

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister.

Millions of Canadians who have experienced the first-hand devastating effects of the Canada-U.S. trade deal want to know what this government's intentions are with the Mexican trade deal. Is it to take this bad deal and make it worse? They have a right to know as taxpayers, as Canadians, what this government's intentions are.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: Will he commit today that before any deal goes any further there will be a full consultation process with the public, with a committee that travels to all provinces and territories, so that this time Canadians will have a chance to comment on a deal before they are locked into it?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is quite wrong when she says: "so that this time Canadians will have a chance to comment on a deal before they are locked into it". The last time, Canadians had an opportunity in a democratic election to comment on the free trade agreement and they spoke in favour of the agreement.

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The last time the House of Commons committee on the trade deal went to 10 cities in 10 days and Canadians did not have a full opportunity to comment. I want to say to the Prime Minister that this time he has a responsibility and the House has a responsibility to Canadians to let them know about this deal.

This weekend while trade ministers were meeting behind closed doors, with the doors wide open there was another group meeting in Mexico with representatives from the U.S., Mexico and Canada, talking about the need to have trade deals that are not just about the economy but that include issues around the environment, health and safety standards, and social rights for workers.

This government has that opportunity now. Will the Prime Minister who last week said he was concerned about human rights ensure in these international trade talks that there is an agreement around social rights, environmental rights and human rights in this trade deal?

**Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science):** Mr. Speaker, let me take the preamble of that question, because once again the hon. member is wrong.

There were in fact two committees of this House that went right across the country and heard arguments on the free trade agreement. There was a special committee and there was also the external affairs committee of the House.

The Canadian people had many opportunities to discuss this and of course as the Prime Minister said they also had an election. What more do you want?

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In a recent speech in Chicago his Minister for International Trade speaking about Canada said: "No man, no woman, no child goes without—decent shelter or proper food".

Given the thousands and thousands of people who rely on food banks and shelters for the homeless on a daily basis in this country, will the Prime Minister withdraw