

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. McDermid:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member has been misrepresenting what the Prime Minister has been saying.

That Party has been saying that we should rush into things. We want to make sure, on behalf of Canadians, that this agreement is done rightly and properly. We are making sure that every i is dotted, that every t is crossed, and that it makes absolute sense.

**Ms. Mitchell:** Scrap it.

**Mr. McDermid:** It will be released very shortly. We are confident of that. It will be a great agreement for Canada. We are really confident of that.

REQUEST THAT DATE BE GIVEN FOR PRODUCTION OF FINAL TEXT

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member says that the Government wants to take the time to ensure that all the i's are dotted and all the t's are crossed. We want to have time to evaluate the total agreement. We want to see the agreement before that evaluation is made.

I will direct my supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Committee hearings are being held today. Monday is the last day for hearings. From reports today it looks as though we will not see this agreement until Monday at least, if not beyond that.

The Prime Minister has indicated time and again that we would have enough time to evaluate this particular deal. It was the end of October, then the middle of November, then the end of November. It is now the beginning of December and reports today indicate that the final agreement is still a number of days away. There are only a handful of days left between now and the parliamentary Christmas recess. There are only 30 days left before the deal is to be signed.

Will the Prime Minister of Canada indicate clearly when the people of Canada and their elected representatives in the House of Commons will have an opportunity to evaluate the completed final draft? We have been waiting through a number of promises. Will he not promise us, in a clear and distinct way, when we can expect that draft?

**Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I am totally surprised at the concern of the Hon. Member and the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party said that it will tear up the agreement. The Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre said the other day that if his Party had anything to do about it they would tear up the agreement. Why is the Hon. Member concerned about seeing it? He has already made up his mind.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cassidy:** You're unbelievable. This is a democracy. This isn't Haiti, this is Canada.

**Mr. McDermid:** The Canadian people will have ample opportunity to examine the final agreement and this House will have ample opportunity to examine legislation that arises from the agreement.

**Mr. Cassidy:** Nonsense.

**Mr. McDermid:** There will be all kinds of opportunity for Canadians and parliamentarians to examine this deal very carefully.

**Mr. Riis:** After the fact.

**Mr. Cassidy:** Where's the Prime Minister? Why won't he answer? He's afraid. He chickened out.

**Mr. Grisé:** Who's afraid of you?

**Mr. Nystrom:** Where's the Gucci boy?

REQUEST THAT SIGNING OF AGREEMENT BE POSTPONED

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a further supplementary question to the Prime Minister since the Parliamentary Secretary has totally missed the point, that is, that Canadians want to see the final deal before it is agreed to and initialled.

The Commons committee will complete its public hearings on Monday. Those public hearings will obviously be finished before the final text is available. Can the Prime Minister, therefore, indicate that he will change his own timetable and postpone the signing of the agreement from January 2 to a later date in order to give the Commons committee proper time to hold public hearings based upon the final document so that Canadians will have a right to participate? After all, this is a democracy and people do have a right to participate in important decisions.

**Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think there has been an agreement or policy of any Government in this country on which there has been such wide consultation with the Canadian public.

**Mr. McCurdy:** Oh, get off it.

**Mr. McDermid:** I can cite chapter and verse of the consultations which have taken place, continue to take place, and will continue to take place with the affected parties. Canadians will have ample opportunity to examine this agreement. There is no doubt whatsoever about that in our minds.

REQUEST THAT COMMITTEE HEARINGS BE EXTENDED

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary knows better. He knows that as a result of testimony before the committee women's organizations, social organizations, labour organizations, and consumer organizations have all been denied any opportunity to consult on this agreement before it is signed.