

By allowing them to consult the texts, we eliminate one of the loudest claims of the anti-globalization movement: the accusation that trade deals are shrouded in secrecy, concluded behind closed doors with only the interests of transnational corporations taken into account."

In other words, the stage is now set to open the process for more robust roles for others who want to be engaged in the development of regional and world wide trade agreements.

Section II: Current Roles of Canadian Parliamentarians

Canadian Parliamentarians have responded to emerging international institutions in a number of ways. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade is the focus of much of this activity. Its chairman, Bill Graham, took the Committee through an extensive review of the WTO in 1999 and reported the views of Canadians on the substance of the WTO and its processes. The Committee's report, *Canada and the Future of the World Trade Organization: Advancing a Millennium Agenda in the Public Interest*, submitted to the House of Commons in June 1999 contained forty-five recommendations for consideration by the government. In addition, three opposition parties (Reform, Bloc Quebecois, NDP) submitted minority reports on these same issues. While the themes of inclusiveness and transparency were woven through many of the recommendations, three spoke directly to this issue. The Committee stated that:

1. The Government should be "providing timely information and feedback to Parliamentarians and citizens during all pre-negotiation, negotiation, implementation and review phases of international trade and investment agreements." (Recommendation 1)
2. "Parliament's institutions, and in particular this Committee, must also be able to examine fully all future trade and investment negotiations, most importantly at the WTO level, prior to Canada implementing into domestic law any binding agreements resulting from such international trade and investment negotiations." (Recommendation 2)
3. "Canada should work with as many WTO Members as possible, in line with the reforms recommended in this Report, to seek institutional improvements for the purposes of achieving greater coordination and coherence among the activities of the WTO and those of other international organizations." (Recommendation 45)

The Government Response to the Standing Committee's report tabled in November 1999, noted that "Parliamentarians have a clear responsibility to know of, and contribute to Canada's international trade agreements" and welcomed "the role of Parliament and the input of all Parliamentarians" into these agreements. The Response also recognized that the WTO and its activities need improvement, particularly in relation to "dispute settlement, transparency and coherence."

A second focus for Parliamentarians is the House and Senate committees that end up considering trade arrangements in the course of other business. For example, because of the important impact of trade on the Canadian agricultural sector, trade-related issues are often part of the agenda of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. In March 1999, the Committee released the results of its "Take Note Hearings on the Upcoming Multilateral Trade