

*Oral Questions*

equally successful one in Montreal this week followed by one in Toronto and one in Calgary.

When there is more time leading to the following budget for 1995 we expect to be able to do even more public consultation.

In terms of this House, we are going to remain faithful, as we are in other things, to the concepts and principles set out in the red book.

• (1505)

As the Prime Minister and the House leader have said, it will be a substantially enhanced role for the finance committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Martin (LaSalle-Émard):** That was the Reform prime minister.

The finance committee will be given the opportunity to hold public hearings and will play a major role in the development of the budget. All members of this House are invited to attend the four consultation meetings that have been announced.

Also, after discussion with the House leader, who I believe will be discussing with his opposite numbers, we, understanding that there is a very short period of time, would like to call for a one day pre-budget debate, which would be the first time it has ever been held, so that all members can give us their views on what the budget should do, along with ordinary Canadians.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

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**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Many Canadians who voted for the government were disappointed that one of the first things the government concerned about job creation did was to implement the North American Free Trade Agreement which many regard as an agreement that makes it more difficult for the government to create jobs and to protect existing jobs.

Following up on the question raised earlier with respect to events in Mexico, an interesting exchange in which those who were against NAFTA defended it and those who were for it criticized it, what does the government intend to do about the situation in Mexico? What is the government prepared to do if the human rights situation does not improve in Mexico?

Are we going to continue in this agreement regardless of what the Mexican army and government do to people who feel these agreements are destroying their lives?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to reply that in the red book we had a very definitive program regarding the need for the improvements to NAFTA before we signed. We managed to get the improvements that we wanted so we were in a position to sign.

Of course as the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, we are following very closely what is happening at this moment in Mexico. We are putting pressure on its government to respect human rights. We will keep pressing.

However, there are a lot of hypothetical questions in the question the member has put to which I am not in a position to reply. We have to see how the situation develops there. We have confidence that the grievances that exist in that society have no relation to the signing of NAFTA.

**The Speaker:** The Chair is aware that we went a little over. It signified the intention of the Chair to cut off question period precisely at three o'clock. We will have one final short question.

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**DAIRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of a question from the other side, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

First, I want to thank the minister for his work on behalf of Canadian farmers to date. He must be aware of the anxiety being felt in the dairy community regarding his negotiations with the Americans on ice cream and yogurt.

Canadian dairy farmers want the government to stand up to the Americans and not to cave in on their unreasonable request for zero tariffs on these products immediately.

What specific action is the minister prepared to take to assure the survival of a viable Canadian dairy industry? Is there a resolution to the problem that will help the Canadian dairy farmer?

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank the hon. member for the question.

Since Canada and the United States are continuing to discuss possible solutions to a variety of outstanding bilateral concerns in agricultural trade, including some that affect the dairy industry, my public comments with respect to this situation for obvious reasons must be rather guarded.

What I can say is that we have had useful discussions with our American counterparts. Those discussions are ongoing. Whether they result in a resolution in the short term or not we will have to wait and see.