

amount of discussion revolved around this point. Experience in other countries, including Australia, was cited. Theoretically the choice of words would make a substantial difference. In practice, however, I doubt very much that this would be the case. I still believe that the policy, personality and outlook of the government and its administrators will be far more important than the choice of words. Some of my friends would find significant benefit in almost any foreign investment. Others would find it difficult to believe that significant benefit to Canada could ever occur, and would so rule. I have no doubt that, in practice, the usual Canadian compromise will prevail. As the ultimate limitation on the interpretation of the act is political it would appear to us that the actual choice of words, in this instance, is not important enough to argue.

It was further suggested that the bill is negative and discriminatory, and that more could be achieved by providing positive incentives to Canadians to invest in Canadian enterprises than by placing obstacles in the path of foreign investment. Strictly speaking, Mr. Speaker, this is quite correct.

The bill is negative and discriminatory. More could be achieved by providing positive incentives to Canadians to invest in Canadian enterprises. But as I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, until those positive measures are in situ, it may be expedient to have a temporary dike behind which the more positive and permanent structures can be built. The idea that the positive measures are in the long run far more important is enthusiastically and unreservedly supported. I will return to this subject in a few minutes and discuss some of the steps which, in our opinion, should be undertaken at once.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we were told that the bill creates a new area of conflict between the provinces and the federal government. Beyond doubt this is the greatest weakness in the bill and one which must be corrected before it is read a third time.

The Premier of New Brunswick, speaking as a representative of the Atlantic area, was against the bill. He feared that the federal government would make decisions which would not reflect the best interests of the Atlantic provinces and take their needs and aspirations fully into account.

Officials speaking on behalf of the government of Quebec stated their grave reservations about federal intrusion into an area which they had considered primarily provincial in nature. They suggested that the federal government should not be able to veto development plans supported by the province.

The governments of Saskatchewan and Ontario both indicated their general support of the principle of Bill C-132, but expressed reservations about specific provisions. The province of Saskatchewan questioned the discretionary powers of the minister and was concerned that the recommendations will be arbitrary and judgmental. They also were anxious to know how the provinces would be involved in the process of assessment.

Ontario's reservations were similar. They felt that the federal government should provide the province in which the foreign investment is proposed with a copy of the notification and any additional information submitted by

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the foreign investor, and that the province, in its turn, should have full opportunity to submit its views on proposed investments.

In our opinion these reservations are too serious to be ignored and must be taken into account. It is for this reason that my colleague, the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay), has placed a number of amendments on the order paper. Motions Nos. 5 and 6 are of cardinal importance in that they are specifically designed to assist in meeting the objections and concerns of provincial governments.

No. 6 specifically requires that a copy of any notice in respect of an investment significantly affecting a province or provinces be sent forthwith, by registered mail, to the province or provinces. This would go a long way toward the avoidance of misunderstandings and confrontations based on lack of early communication. The provinces will know from the start what is being proposed, and will have time to prepare their submissions and do the investigation necessary to have a full and meaningful input.

The motion listed as No. 5 is the complementary amendment. It requires that the minister, in establishing a panel of officers to work with the Commissioner, will choose people from inside and outside his own department who are representative in every respect of all the regions of Canada. The Commissioner then, in any case where a province or provinces may be significantly affected, will draw from that pool of officers a panel where the majority of members will represent the region significantly affected.

This proposal falls far short of the provincial veto which has been suggested by some as being a prerequisite. While we have come to the conclusion that a provincial veto would make the entire bill inoperative, and therefore cannot be supported if the bill is to be of any significance whatsoever, the requirement to have recommendations to the minister made by people whose hearts and experience reflect the needs and aspirations of the region most directly affected, will guarantee that the feelings of all parts of Canada will be taken into account and not just the so-called Ottawa point of view.

The spokesman for the NDP indicated that this would be going too far in the direction of provincial participation and might lead to balkanization. I would think that that is not a correct interpretation. As a matter of fact, I am surprised that that hon. member did not insist that the recommendation reflect the point of view of the province or provinces concerned. He should realize that this is a recommendation to the minister and not a decision in itself. It is ultimately the minister who recommends to the Governor in Council, and the Governor in Council that takes the decision. If in some instances a recommendation made by a panel of officers representing a specific part of the country represents more the aspect and the points of view of that part of the country, there is no obligation on the minister to accept the recommendation. If he feels so strongly that the national interest is being prejudiced, he can override the recommendation because he has the ultimate responsibility. It seems fundamental that in this process of making recommendations to the minister, the provincial or regional point of view be pre-eminent. In the past this was the point of view that was often neglected.