

Private Members' Business

A certain amount of Canadians believe that we are sovereignists because we hate Canadians. This is absolutely not true. We love Canadians but love has absolutely nothing to do with politics. I love my father very much; that is love. However I would never let my father run my business; that is politics.

I have worked everywhere in Canada: Edmonton, Toronto, southern Ontario, Regina, Saskatchewan and Saint John, New Brunswick. I have also worked in the United States: Texas, Florida, West Point and New York. I fully agree with the Prime Minister of Canada. If I were an immigrant from anywhere in the world trying to find a new country in which to live, Canada would be my first choice. However I am not an immigrant trying to find a new country in which to live. I already have a country. My country is Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak on the motion put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Timiskaming—French River, which urges the government to consider implementing incentives to promote mining exploration and development in Canada.

Canada extends over some 10 million square kilometres and is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of natural resources. Its mining industry was ranked amongst the best in the world in many areas of mineral production. Mining has always played a major role in the Canadian economy, which is hardly surprising, since Canada is one of the biggest producers and exporters of non-fuel mineral resources.

Statistics for 1992 show that the non-fuel mineral resource industry accounted for a little over 4 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product and almost 3 per cent of employment. Also, these statistics indicate that the total value of the non-fuel mineral resource production for 1992 reach \$14.6 billion, which is 41 per cent of overall mineral production in Canada. It is important, also, to remember that Canada produces a little over 60 minerals. Except for phosphorus, manganese, bauxite and chrome, our country can meet its own needs in terms of minerals.

Statistics on exploration also speak volumes. Non-fuel mineral resource exports reached \$23 billion, a little over 15 per cent of total exports for Canada. During the same period, the value of our non-fuel mineral resource imports was estimated at \$13.2 billion, for a trade surplus of over \$9.8 billion. All these statistics reflect the outstanding progress made by the Canadian mining industry.

Technological innovation also has something to do with the boom enjoyed by this industry. However, the industry did not escape from the upheaval caused by the recession during the late

1980s and the early 1990s. Mining was hard hit during this period. But since 1993, it is recovering nicely. All of us in this House recognize that several irritants are still preventing Canada's mining industry from hitting its stride.

• (1800)

This is why I wholeheartedly support the motion put forward by the hon. member for Timiskaming—French River, whom I wish to congratulate for this excellent initiative, especially since my hon. colleague showed, in the eloquent speech he made when he introduced his motion, that he is very much aware of the current condition of federal finances.

[English]

This motion has nothing to do with tax breaks, grants, or subsidies. Its only goal is to bring the government to consider measures that would not cost a lot of money to the Canadian taxpayer but will go a long way to ensure a brighter future to the Canadian mining industry and to the mining communities across Canada.

In its report of December 1994 entitled "Lifting Canadian Mining Off the Rocks", the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources proposed nine recommendations. Some of those recommendations would cost money if implemented, while others would emphasize collaboration and partnership that would alleviate some problems for the industry. Here are some of the recommendations.

Recommendation number three: "That the federal government introduce a mineral exploration incentive by modifying the Income Tax Act to incorporate a change in the adjusted cost base of flow through shares from a value of zero to the actual cost of the shares, that this new fiscal measure incorporate a cap on a given company's take-up of the tax benefit, and that the new incentive vehicle be in place for a maximum duration of five years".

Recommendation number four: "That in order to enhance the effectiveness of exploration work financed by means of flow through shares, the federal government enable the exploration activity funded through such shares to be carried out over a period of one full year after financing".

Recommendation number seven: "That once initial steps have been taken to improve the investment climate in Canadian mining, the federal government, its provincial and territorial counterparts, and the domestic mining industry develop through consultation an integrated approach to communicate the positive features of the Canadian mining sector to potential investors".

In May 1995 the Minister of Natural Resources responded very favourably to the report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on mining. She stated: "The Government of Canada remains committed to fostering a modern environmen-