

Investment Canada Act

investment which will be continued in Canada to develop us as an industrialized nation.

Several reports have been presented by well recognized groups. They are not necessarily groups with which I would agree, but they are certainly respected organizations. Recently they have released studies which clearly indicate that large foreign investment in Canada does not necessarily produce the kind of jobs about which this Government is talking. Much of the future investment being talked about at the present time will probably go into capital-intensive industries, such as exploration for oil, minerals, et cetera. That is capital-intensive investment, not necessarily labour-intensive. Just because huge chunks and dollops of capital investment come into Canada does not necessarily mean job creation. It could very well mean capital and profit creation, but not necessarily job creation.

If the Government were really serious about attacking the economic problems of our country, perhaps it should take a look at using some of the traditional approaches which we know work. For example, why does the Government not get into the housing market in a very serious way if it is interested in creating jobs? The figures are apparent and real to anyone who cares to look at them. For every one job created in building and constructing housing, another three to four jobs are created in spin-off industries. In most urban centres in the country there is a vacancy rate in adequate housing of less than 1 per cent. My office, like that of most other Hon. Members, in the last year or so has been inundated by people complaining that they do not have access to affordable housing. I am certainly not an old person, but when I was married and purchased a house it was a feasible thing to do. People still expect to be able to purchase their own homes. One cannot do that today unless one is in a high income bracket, or both partners are working, the husband and the wife. For most young couples getting married today the possibility of ever owning a home is minimal. There are more and more young married couples today who find that they have to move into their parents' homes in order to find accommodation because there is simply no available accommodation elsewhere. If the Government were serious about filling that obvious social need and creating jobs at the same time, perhaps it should get into the housing market in the way the private investor is not willing to do at the present time.

There is also another approach; that is, putting much more money into the pocket of taxpayers. Why does the Government not take a real look at correcting some of the injustices with which many senior citizens are faced simply because they do not have enough spending power? Why does the Government not take a look at putting more money into the hands of senior citizens so that they can live out the remainder of their lives in some dignity? At the same time this would put money back into the economy, and they would be making another contribution in addition to the one they have already made to Canada during their lifetime.

In the Investment Canada Bill the Government has hinted that it wants to increase investment in areas of technological change and technological development. I have not seen any-

where in the Bill, and I have not heard in the discussions by anyone on the government side, any reference to the effects of technological change on Canada's workforce. Very little is being done at the present time to train young people between the ages of 15 and 24 for skills which will be required for that big explosion, if it ever happens, in technological change or technological development. Young people, not only in my own riding but elsewhere, have written to me to indicate that they have gone through government programs to upgrade their skills for technological development only to find that they cannot obtain jobs because the Government has not placed any emphasis on creating employment opportunities in the fields for which it is training young people. That is very short-sighted, in my view.

I do not think we can say to young people in a very sexy way that we will open the doors to foreign investment in the country, that the doors are open to business, that all kinds of money will be attracted to the country and that jobs will be created. It is fooling no one. It sure is not fooling the people who are listening to this debate. It is certainly not fooling the young people of this country who are beginning to develop a very cynical attitude, not only toward Governments but politicians at every level when they start talking about job creation. They know what Governments and politicians are doing. They are putting up screens of public relations gestures, without any real meat in the proposals. If this Government had any sense at all, and the integrity it talks about, that is the kind of approach it would develop.

● (1620)

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in this House today to speak on Bill C-15, Investment Canada, and the motions.

It is the commitment of this Government to adopt an approach of consultation rather than confrontation in our attempts to develop a shared view of our economic strategy and to adopt policies that will allow the private sector to sustain growth. Bill C-15 is one of the examples of this approach of consultation. Judging by the number of witnesses who appeared before the standing committee and the debate which resulted during clause-by-clause deliberations, Bill C-15 is noted to be an important Bill.

We can no longer take wealth creation for granted. Rather, we must vigorously pursue and encourage that which can provide us with wealth creation. I believe we are beginning to look realistically at our problems. Bill C-15 is one of the first steps toward a resolution of these problems.

After a decade of hostility toward foreign investment, Canada is now ready and willing to welcome foreign investment. Our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has stated that the Government of Canada is there to assist and not harass the private sector in creating the new wealth and new jobs that Canada needs. This new attitude is the beginning of instilling a confidence in all sectors of our country.

I do not want to take a lot of time because I am somewhat concerned, as are the people of Canada. We have had 16 or 17