

Foreign Investment Review

of Canadians in all geographic regions. A national will must emerge, and the first small but reasonable steps taken in this bill might provide the spark necessary for the debate which should take place right across the country. Since this issue affects us all, action must be taken in a way which will not disturb national unity. We should bear in mind that there are two types of criticism of this bill. Some say it goes too far and others say it does not go far enough. This illustrates the lack of consensus about what needs to be done now and in the future. If agreement is reached some day that we must place ourselves in a position to exercise our sovereignty, action must be taken in a way which would bring all Canadians together in a great national adventure of true nationhood. Then we could be of help to other nations to a far greater extent than at present.

Again, I congratulate the government. I want to congratulate all the speakers I have heard and read in this debate so far. We are all very concerned about this question and I hope the principle of what we are trying to do in this bill will be accepted. There may, of course, be disagreement as to the method and the tactics employed, but I very much hope that everyone will understand the basic reason for bringing the bill forward—the strengthening of our country so that it can fulfil the promise we all predict for it. This is why I hope there will not be too much criticism of the measure on political grounds merely because it happens to be a bill brought down by the present government. It might just as well have been brought in under the government of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), or it might have been introduced back in the days of Laurier or St. Laurent. It was not.

The time has come when the Canadian conscience wants this type of debate to take place so that all the facts can be brought out in connection with a national consensus or decision as to where we are going.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, the minister, when introducing Bill C-132 on foreign investment last Friday, seemed so overly preoccupied with the Conservative position on the matters raised in this legislation that I feel compelled to spend a few minutes at least in trying to soothe his sensitivities. The minister will not find us quarrelling with the general purpose of this bill as set out in clause 2(1) thereof. Who, indeed, is not vitally concerned with the ability of Canadians to maintain effective control over their economic environment? The hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) has reflected our concern and has said that the bill should be sent to committee for study.

I would suggest through you, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister would have had much less to apologize for last Friday had he made some attempt, however meagre, to admit that this bill is but a part of a very small short-term answer to a very large, long-term problem. I assure him that all concerned Canadians have looked to him for a range of programs to achieve the solution to these problems, and I hope he will appreciate the disappointment we must feel when all we hear from him is an ad hoc reaction which cannot be, and is not, a satisfactory substitute for long-term, forward planning.

[Mr. Walker.]

When business in this country looks for positive economic incentives, the minister surely cannot be surprised with their disappointment at finding penal measures. We are a positive and industrious people, Mr. Speaker, and if there need be a Criminal Code for foreign-controlled business, let it play but a minor role in our total federal program; let it merely support the fundamental thrust of positive encouragement of Canadian business.

Let it also be a hallmark of this thrust that the federal government can no longer continue to operate in a vacuum. Surely the minister must agree with the Conservative position that this type of legislation dictates federal-provincial consultation and co-operation. Some could say that to bring Bill C-132 forward without having consulted the provinces is bad manners, Mr. Speaker. It is more than that—it is bad business. Therefore, I say to the minister that he need not have been so preoccupied with our position had he given us some reason to believe that he subscribed to but three basic fundamentals: First, that this legislation is but a minor part of a comprehensive business program, which the minister should be obliged to outline in detail; second, that the over-all program will be one which embodies a positive encouragement for Canadians; That he will retreat from his unilateral position and consult immediately with the provinces.

In my riding, Mr. Speaker, there are many companies which are foreign owned and I, for one, am happy to see that the government has not succumbed to pressures from some quarters to embark upon a corporate witch-hunt. A test which we have used in our communities with some success could be classified by some as a moral test. We have said to all members of our business community: Are you a good corporate citizen? Are you discharging the responsibility which inevitably accompanies the freedom you enjoy to be a part of this community? The test, Mr. Speaker, has been one of responsibility rather than nationality.

I can appreciate and share the concern of all Canadians when they hear of takeovers, forced sales and similar transactions. Of equal concern, though, is this government's apparent willingness to react in patchwork fashion to these economic pressures. This indeed, Mr. Speaker, gives business, regardless of where control lies, lack of confidence in government. Business is saying to itself: What will be the next step in this Liberal-NDP alliance? In finding itself in such a vulnerable position, should any business, especially Canadian-owned business, engage in long-term expansion plans? Surely it is not unreasonable for all business to ask whether in future we shall continue to engage in an adversary system of business/government relations.

The hon. member for Trinity has called for an imaginative and dynamic economic structure. I am proud to subscribe to his presentation enthusiastically and with confidence, and I wish to speak today for a group of Canadians who are anxious to participate in this structure. I wish to emphasize the forgotten Canadian businessman who until I came to Ottawa I knew as the small businessman but who, for clarity's sake, I will describe as the very small Canadian businessman—the proprietorship, the partnership, the very small incorporated company. These people do not have \$250,000 in gross assets. Their revenues do not