

Investment Canada Act

crimination which has gone on far too long in this country and which passage of this Act will only make worse.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to have an opportunity to participate in another debate on this Bill, particularly on Motion No. 19. I was somewhat hesitant to rise, Mr. Speaker, because I wanted to give the opportunity to Hon. Members of the Conservative Party to speak. I know that deep down inside they want to participate. Be that as it may, I guess they just won't be able to do so. They have probably been prohibited by someone on the Tory side. They have been whipped into line again and won't be able to say what they want to say. So I would like to take this opportunity to say it for them, as I think those Hon. Members opposite need and are looking forward to our help.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Boudria: I can tell from some of the noises coming from the book-ends over here, Mr. Speaker, that that is indeed the case.

The position of our Party is that the Minister and the committee chairman, of course, had rejected Liberal efforts in the past to make a positive contribution to this Bill by giving the Minister the power to promote investment by Canadians. The Minister only wants to exercise negative powers, as we all know, and then very rarely. The Minister seems not to be interested at all, unfortunately, in either participating in this debate himself or even to avail himself of those powers and then share them with his cabinet colleagues. He wants to exercise that authority himself and have that secretive type of discretion which we know is becoming an all too familiar approach of this Government.

I thought that some of the Hon. Members of the Conservative Party, who want a more open Government and who have campaigned on that theme during the last election campaign, would have stood today and demanded from the Minister that this whole process be changed.

I received a little pamphlet which I want to share with you, Mr. Speaker. It is entitled "Speakers Bureau of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada". It says that if one has a meeting someplace, one can phone that group and they will send back-benchers, Members of Parliament, Senators and Parliamentary Secretaries to speak in one's riding. This is misleading advertising, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Côté) should investigate this. We in this House know that Conservative back-benchers do not speak. I have yet to see a Conservative back-bencher speak on this issue, save and except, perhaps, the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mrs. Sparrow) who spoke for a few moments a few days ago. But the Hon. Member who is sitting at the other end here today should be making an important contribution to the debate on this Bill. He has factories in his riding, and the workers in those factories who want their jobs protected want him and the Hon. Member for Montreal-Mercier (Ms. Jacques), and all the others, to participate in this debate.

We would hope that they will say that they want this Bill to be modified in the way that Liberals propose.

• (1115)

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Boudria: Of course, if the Minister really had the interests of the Canadian people at heart, if he really wanted to do the proper thing, he would withdraw the Bill entirely. But we know that that is not likely to happen, so we have attempted to put forward a series of strong and constructive amendments to convince this Government that the Bill could be salvaged somewhat, given a certain willingness on the part of Conservative members to understand that the modifications are indeed very necessary. We have not had the opportunity of convincing them so far, but we will continue to make our point and speak forcefully in this House on behalf of the people of Canada because the back-bench Conservative members are either unable or unwilling to do so. I am sure you understand this, Mr. Speaker, and that at an opportune time you of course would want to say this on behalf of the people of Canada because of the unwillingness of the Conservative members to do so.

We in our Party want to make the sharing of information with other Departments and agencies a formal duty of the Minister. We remember from the Domtar case and others that this particular Minister, and perhaps others who will succeed him in the future, does not have the regional interests of this country at heart.

I see the Minister of Public Works (Mr. La Salle) sitting across from me. He will know, because he knows how government does business, being in charge, in a way, of letting government contracts, that this can sometimes lead him into controversy. But the fact that he is familiar with how government does business, and being a Minister from Quebec, he will know, and so will the Hon. Member for Dollard (Mr. Weiner), that it is important to have that regional input into those kinds of decisions which may have an adverse effect on Canadian jobs. One of the best ways to prove this is to look back at the Domtar issue and several others in which unilateral decisions were imposed on everyone by the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens). I see my friend across the way is shaking his head in disapproval but he knows, being the good Member that he is, that many, many people had to lobby the Minister, and ultimately the real power in the Cabinet had to tell the Minister what to do, otherwise that province would have been forgotten. Well, on many other issues there may not be the intervention that there was in this particular case. Ministers would have their way individually and not act in the best interests of our country.

That holds true on several other issues. We know the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion has some rather unique views, shall we say, on the issue of foreign investment. He believes all investments should be allowed to come in, even if it means eliminating Canadian jobs.