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THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Part of a Speech by the Honourable Jean-Luc Pepin,
Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, to the
Chamber of Commerce, Victoria, May 8, 1972:

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British Columbia, like the rest of Canada, has generally welcomed, as we shall continue to welcome, the addition from the outside of capital, technology, and management to help develop Canadian resources.

Partly because of that "open-door" policy, Canadians have come to enjoy... and take for granted... many advantages -- including our high standard of living.

Quite naturally, concern over our ability to direct our own economy has risen along with the degree of foreign ownership.

Most Canadians remain ambivalent on the subject, but, according to one recent survey, almost 44 per cent of us view American ownership of Canadian companies as having an adverse effect on our economy. This compares with 41 per cent two years ago, and 34 per cent three years ago.

Strangely enough, while Ontario is normally considered Canada's centre of "economic nationalism", the same survey found that the greatest anxiety actually exists in British Columbia, where 53 per cent of the public said U.S. ownership was a "bad thing" (University of Windsor, International Business Studies research, sample 5,000 Canadians).

The Federal Government shares this concern -- hence the thorough examination, hence the announcement of May 2.

Screening, Another Step

Canada has, in the past, adopted a number of measures to maintain and foster Canadian control.

Foreign investment in banks and other key financial institutions, broadcasting facilities, newspapers and magazines is subject to specific laws effectively keeping them under Canadian control.