

Foreign Takeovers Review Act

the ante." With the reduction of the corporate tax to 40 per cent, this has now been put into permanent legislation. That was an attempt to outbribe the Americans under the DISC program. I do not think we can operate in this way. There is no indication whether or not we want all these companies, whether they are worth bribing or of what value they are to us. It has come to the point where the government is making such substantial bribes that we wonder whether the whole thing is worth it. We do the same under DREE. There is increasing evidence that these companies would have located without the bribes.

There is no real science policy. I notice that the Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Gillespie) is in the chamber. I have been looking to him for great things. To date, all I have been getting has been nice speeches crossing my desk, but no science policy. We were hopeful that once a member of the cabinet was designated to be responsible for science, we would hear something. If something is going on, we are not hearing about it. I suspect there is still no policy and that we are still passing out money in the vain hope that perhaps some of it will do some good.

The government is either walking or running around, depending on their energy on any given day, in a grand flap. They do not seem to know where they are going or what they are doing. The air force used to call it "situation snafu". That means it is all "fuddleduddled". I remember what "snafu" means.

Mr. McCleave: Fouled up is what you mean.

Mr. Saltsman: They are more careful of their language in the air force than in the House of Commons, which is saying something.

Mr. Dinsdale: The gentlemen of the air force.

Mr. Saltsman: It is for many of these reasons that I feel the legislation is unsatisfactory and should not be passed. Therefore, I wish to move the following amendment, seconded by the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton):

That Bill C-201 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the government should give consideration to the introduction of a measure providing for an independent review body answerable to Parliament with power to limit and control new foreign investment in Canada and the expansion of foreign-owned corporations already established in this country, as well as the take-over of existing Canadian corporations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Chair would like assistance on the procedural acceptability of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. Saltsman). Hon. members may argue that it is declaratory of a principle in opposition to the principle of the bill but even if that is the case, and I do not admit it to be at this point, it does seem to me that the proposed amendment goes considerably beyond the scope of the bill which we are now considering. It deals with the expansion, for example, of foreign-owned corporations already established in this country. I cite that only as an example that comes to mind from taking a quick look at the proposed

[Mr. Saltsman.]

amendment. I would be very pleased to have the assistance of hon. members.

Mr. Jerome: Mr. Speaker, as might befit the occasion, the amendment is an ingenious attempt at orderliness, but I submit that it is procedurally unacceptable for two or three reasons. First, if the amendment is accepted, it would raise a most obvious difficulty in that it proposes the establishment of an independent review body which is answerable to Parliament. This body would have the power to limit and control, not only the subject matter that is envisaged in the bill, but a wide range of subject matters.

I think it is accepted as a matter of course that if such a body is to have any function and power, it would have to be supported by a staff and secretariat in order to be competent and operate as would be envisaged by the motion. The body would have to be staffed by talented, capable economists and experienced persons who would command a substantial salary and require staff to support them. Obviously, there would be a considerable expense to the public treasury which is not envisaged in the recommendation from his Excellency. It cannot be seriously argued that if such a body were set up it would not create, or require, that sort of expenditure; the hon. member would not suggest that it would act on a voluntary basis and that its support staff would do the same. So, there is a fundamental difficulty.

• (1630)

In addition, I would submit two further considerations. First, the question immediately arises whether the amendment is really opposed to the principle of the bill, as an amendment on second reading must be. I am sure the hon. member and his colleagues do, in fact, accept the principle that control should be exercised over takeovers by foreign investors of undertakings in Canada. So what they are really saying is that they agree with the basic principle of the bill calling for control, but require, or suggest, that control be exercised by a different body in a different way and that it be exercised over a wider range of transactions than presently contemplated. In short, they are saying that the principle of the bill is acceptable but that its provisions do not go far enough.

The precedents are so clear as to scarcely need citation. In this situation, amendments of the kind the hon. member has in mind are not in order, for the obvious reason that if the principle of a bill is accepted, specific proposals can be examined in detail during the clause by clause study in committee at which time amendments can be put forward. In addition, amendments of this sort can be introduced at the report stage to flesh out the skeleton of ideas now before us—amendments to clauses or the addition of further clauses to the bill to accomplish the objective the hon. member wishes to pursue. In other words, an attempt is being made here to propose amendments to the bill by the device, not of moving such amendments now, which would be clearly out of order, but by seeking to amend the motion for second reading and thus having the government consider the introduction of a totally different kind of measure. The device of referring this back to the government is, therefore, a means of getting around difficulties which would arise in making