

Foreign Takeovers Review Act

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I cannot point to any specific review being carried out at this time with the intent the hon. member has mentioned, but all governmental bodies and agencies are, of course, under constant survey by the government to make sure that they act within the terms of the relevant statutes.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have gone beyond the time allotted to the question period. If there are supplementaries on this matter, so wide in its connotations, they could be put tomorrow. I think no serious harm would be done by the delay. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley who has been trying to ask a question during the whole of the question period.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS**PROPOSED MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE AND HIGHWAY—PLANS TO TRAIN NATIVE PEOPLE FOR JOBS**

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In view of the possible construction of a Mackenzie highway as envisaged by the Prime Minister, and the large number of skilled workmen which would be required on such a project, and similar projects such as the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline, may I ask whether the minister has any definite plans to train native people so that they can find employment in connection with these undertakings?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think this question is so general in nature that the minister should indicate whether he wishes to make a statement on motions. He should not make the statement at this time.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): My answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

• (1520)

[English]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**FOREIGN TAKEOVERS REVIEW ACT****MEASURE TO PROVIDE FOR CONTROL OF FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF CANADIAN COMPANIES**

The House resumed, from Wednesday, May 31, consideration of the motion of Mr. Pepin that Bill C-201, to provide for the review and assessment of acquisitions of control of Canadian business enterprises by certain persons, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

Hon. Eric Kierans (Duvernay): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to say a few words in this debate on Bill C-201.

[Mr. Thomas (Moncton).]

I might start off on an informal note by relating an experience I had three weeks ago today at New York University when I was one of a group of 25 economists discussing the rising tide of nationalism throughout the world and the growing opposition to the activities and expansion of multinational corporations. I think we saw some of the results of this opposition in two countries just last week in the shape of expropriations and takeovers in Syria and Iraq. Included in the group were senior representatives of two of the largest multinational corporations, IBM and Standard Oil of New Jersey, neither of whom had found anything in our legislation to disturb them. They said we had adopted in Canada a very moderate and liberal policy which did, indeed, surprise them. But what surprised me most was that many economists there, Japanese, European, Latin American and Indian, did not really want to discuss the Canadian case. The Canadian case, to most of them, was not one which would provide them with indications of what they themselves could do by way of policy to prevent the growth of foreign investment on such a scale in their own countries. To them, the experience in Canada, where United States manufacturing and resource development activities have taken over to such an enormous extent, is, indeed, a horrible example, but what they were really concerned about finding was some hint of a policy which might prevent such a situation ever arising in their own countries. In other words, we are a special case.

I might say I agree with those who have expressed the view that the bill before us does nothing, really, to come to grips with the overwhelming problem which faces Canada. The reason for this, to a large extent, is that it attempts to provide solutions to a general, or national problem, by the taking of ad hoc decisions. In other words, each particular takeover is to be examined on its own merits, and if it is found to be in the general Canadian interest it will be approved, otherwise it will not be approved. But I submit to Your Honour that there is no takeover which could not, in a sense, be proven to be an advantage in particular situations. However, this is not where the problem lies. It matters not in whose riding this takes place. On examining a takeover, one looks at the reasons for the takeover. Let us say one finds on the side of the seller, or the Canadian, that he is a man who has grown old and tired, having developed his business. There is no continuity of management. He is responsible for an operation that employs 50 or 160 people, but his sons are not interested in entering the business. Therefore, he has to look around for management.

If it is not accepted that there should be this kind of takeover or sale of assets, then this whole enterprise is going to place in jeopardy the livelihood, the salaries and wages, of the existing employees of the firm. I do not think there is any member of this House who, if he were to act on behalf of such a buyer, could fail to prove that the buyer of such an enterprise could provide more research and development, as well as more capital, than existing entrepreneurs. By providing more employment and more products, he could prove that that particular takeover would be in the interests of that particular locality or region. As I say, that is not the problem that is facing Canada. Our problem is related to what I suppose could be called, not only in the discipline of economics but in