

they have to try to buy Canadian, and finally they have to employ Canadians and act like good corporate citizens of Canada.

I have set out what I think is a reasonable position with respect to foreign investment and I point out to the Hon. Member that we are going to have a lot more of it. When the British rule over Hong Kong ends we are going to get a lot of investment from there. That is already happening in western Canada.

Does the Hon. Member agree with those kinds of provisions for the control of foreign investment? Would he take away or add to them? Does he have any further policy suggestions we could use?

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, in order to save time I will address what the Hon. Member has referred to as the ideological debate over control of foreign investment. As he will know, and I think one of his colleagues raised it, as did the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy), Investment Canada has not refused any applicant, according to its annual report. That tells me something. On the one hand, applicants were so fantastic no one dared to refuse them, which is somewhat unlikely. Or, the more likely scenario, the Government has a deliberate policy of not refusing any application. This is for two reasons: First, its own ideological bent; second, because the Government did not want to offend Americans when it was negotiating this trade agreement. Both reasons are wrong, in my view. You never negotiate from a position of weakness no matter what you want to do. To bend over backwards before you start or in the middle of the process is not doing this country any good. The Americans sure did not stop imposing countervailing duties on us while they were negotiating.

As to control, not that I was a part of it but the previous Liberal Government enacted the Foreign Investment Review Act. It may have had flaws. It certainly made a few people in the U.S. get their backs up. Perhaps amendments were required. Some people brought to the attention of this House that someone opening a hotdog stand or what have you had to go through the application process. That may have been unreasonable sometimes, maybe not. After all, the largest chain of restaurants in the world is McDonald's and they sell hamburgers and other fast food. It is an important business. Nevertheless, we need foreign investment legislation similar, perhaps not identical, to FIRA. We need some form of protection.

Second, with respect to research, it is important to note that since the Government has been in office, 94 per cent of the foreign investment went to takeovers only. The Science Council of Canada said quite clearly that in those circumstances you do not get research in branch plants. That is not good for our country. In the debate on Bill C-22, the drug legislation, we wanted guarantees there would be research and not just branch plants.

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claudy Maily (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to represent the Minister of Communications (Ms. MacDonald) in this debate on a question of historic significance for this country.

[English]

I am also proud to stand in this House and speak about the achievement of our Government in building a stronger, healthier and more vibrant nation, more secure in its identity than ever before. A nation whose cultural sovereignty has never been more cherished. A nation which recently reached a new maturity, as witness the responsible way the 10 Premiers of our country, representing all of the people of Canada, dealt with the inclusion of my native province in the constitutional Accord. It is also a nation whose artistic and cultural communities have never been accorded a more important place in the priorities of a Government.

Unfortunately, we are debating today a motion which is both misguided and mischievous on such a crucial matter as the economic future of our country. The motion is fundamentally flawed. Why? Because it is intended to create uncertainty. However, I have faith in the people of Canada, unlike the NDP which fears the free expression of the public's choice. I believe in the common sense of the people of Canada and in their sense of purpose and pride. I also believe these grow stronger every day, not weaker.

I am not a timid soul. Neither are most Canadians. Therefore, I am saddened that this motion pretends there is a threat to our nation, that Canada has been presented with demands by the U.S. Government for "unlimited investment freedom in Canada". What absolute nonsense. Yesterday the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner) said that our neighbours had asked for "a total unfettered right to buy up any Canadian business they want". Then he said "wide open investment". What do we hear about today? We hear about "unlimited investment" that would "threaten Canadian sovereignty and cultural identity". Yesterday he cited newspaper reports of an interview with our chief trade negotiator, Simon Reisman, and asked why the Government had not said no to suggestions that the American investor should be able to buy Canadian newspapers, radio and television stations, or publishing firms.

• (1640)

The Leader of the Opposition did not read the newspapers very carefully yesterday. I think that happens to him more and more often these days. He should look more closely at those reports, as should all Canadians who are interested in the trade negotiations and the firm commitment of the Government to strengthen and enhance our cultural industries and our national identity.