

Foreign Investment Review Act

wording of the motion which for me was a problem. The circularity is that the purpose of the committee is to review the purposes of the Foreign Investment Review Act. I am not sure if the President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Baker) was here when I was making my point. I indicated that it is possible the committee may find the purposes set out in the Foreign Investment Review Act are an inadequate statement of the problem. We wanted to be sure that the committee would not be restricted to doing simply a plumbing job on the Foreign Investment Review Act, but it would be looking at the problem of foreign investment.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, just to further that, I should like to look at paragraph (2) which deals with the recommendations for the committee. It reads as follows:—to make recommendations for changes in the act or its implementation with a view,

(a) to increase the effectiveness of the act in the achievement of its purpose.

Mr. Rae: “Of its purpose”.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Yes. I think that would encompass a review of the field and a review of the problem; I could not imagine anything else. I just want the hon. member to know that we do not intend to fetter the committee. I hope that is the assurance the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) was requesting on behalf of his party.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, with that firm assurance from the President of the Privy Council, we are prepared to let the resolution pass this afternoon.

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind being associated with the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae). He has a very nice family. But the thought that this committee should study the whole phenomenon of foreign investment, in all its details and intricacies, is something rather frightening. I would have hoped that the committee would concentrate rather early on ways and means and instrumentalities more than the phenomenon as a whole.

I should just like us to be cautious. The danger in what is being said here now is that, in the hope of being accommodating, we might make the mandate of the committee an impossible one.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, that is a good point. I am not arguing that point, but I think the question put to me was whether there would be any fetter by the government with respect to the review, and the answer is no. The committee itself may decide to deal with the matter, which is quite within the purview of the committee. It may choose to deal with it in the manner raised or suggested by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Pepin). I think I was asked for a specific assurance, and I hope I have given it to the satisfaction of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Knowles: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to let the committee make the decisions as to what it will do. We just wanted to be sure that the committee would not be fettered by

[Mr. Rae.]

a government direction. We welcome the assurance given this afternoon by the President of the Privy Council.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

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VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS**STRENGTHENING OF ROLE—APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

Hon. Walter Baker (for the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications) moved:

That a special committee of the House of Commons be appointed to inquire into and report upon means to strengthen the role of the voluntary sector in Canadian society;

That the committee, taking into account the scope of activities now being carried out by the voluntary sector, the problems being faced by voluntary groups and the extent, nature and impact of current government support, report its conclusions and recommendations with respect to the measures that could be taken by the federal government to strengthen the role of the voluntary sector

(1) as an objective that is desirable in its own right,

(2) as an alternative to public dependence on government services, and

(3) in ways that would enhance the ability of such groups to operate independently of government

together with such other matters as the committee considers relevant;

That the committee submit reports from time to time, as appropriate, and in any case a final report not later than May 31, 1980;

That the special committee be composed of seven members of the House of Commons to be designated at a later date;

That the committee have the power to appoint from among its members such subcommittees as may be deemed advisable and necessary and to delegate to such subcommittees all or any of its powers except the power to report directly to the House;

That the committee have power to sit during sittings and adjournments of the House of Commons;

That the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, and to examine witnesses and to print such papers and evidence from day to day as may be ordered by the committee;

That the committee have the power to adjourn from place to place within Canada; and

That the committee be empowered to retain the services of expert advisers and to commission studies or research to assist in its work and that it also be empowered to retain such professional, technical, clerical and stenographic help as may be required.

● (1540)

Mrs. Diane Stratas (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this motion to establish a special committee which would investigate and report on the appropriate means by which the role of the voluntary sector in Canadian society can be strengthened. I support this motion because it manifests the long-standing concern and willingness