

Gulf Canada

of this whole transaction, the number of bidders and the various bids, public?

Mr. Stevens: I know that Hon. Members will understand that we cannot have it both ways. I have indicated that this is a private transaction. It is a transaction that we on this side of the House like to encourage. It is the private sector in action.

I am not free to start disclosing—even if I knew—who all the bidders are. For example, I know of an alternative bidder because he was in touch with us. He is a very substantial all-Canadian bidder. He frankly felt that he could not justify this size of bid. Although he was close, as far as he was concerned, he had to fall out on a question of price. That was the only reason he backed off.

As far as the Hon. Member's comment about the option shares is concerned and assuring that they would go to Canadians, that is not within our power. Naturally, we will mention to Olympia & York that we hope they can complete the deal, including taking down those option shares. However, if they decide for any reason that that option could be transferred to somebody else, we would naturally hope and indicate to the Reichmanns that they give Canadians a chance to pick it up.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Minister talks about having it both ways. It seems to me that his statement today is clearly a case of having it both ways. On the same day that his Government evoked closure on the Investment Canada Bill and on the same day that the Government is introducing a plan that would abandon Canada rather than invest in Canada the Minister cites the increase in Canadianization of the petrochemical industry, which can be directly tracked to two Liberal programs—the NEP and FIRA—which his Government is in the process of dismantling and destroying. How can he talk about Canadianization of the petrochemical industry at the same time that his Government's future initiatives or lack thereof with respect to Investment Canada will in fact prevent the kind of Canadianization of the petrochemical industry which was fully in evidence as a result of the previous initiatives by past Liberal Governments?

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is wrong on at least two scores. By referring to Investment Canada as something that would perhaps not facilitate this type of Chevron-Gulf-Olympia & York transaction, of course, she is dead wrong. If Investment Canada were in place six months ago, the type of deal that took place here would have been exactly the same. This is a reviewable transaction. The deal we have proposed with Chevron would have been very similar. Of course, the added element would have been that we would have had the power and certainly the mandate in Investment Canada positively to promote Canadian investment.

When the Hon. Member says that we will not get these kinds of deals as a result of our changes to the NEP, I find that a tremendous riddle. Although I cannot prove it, the fact is that it is very unlikely that a Canadian group—Olympia &

York or anybody else—would have found Gulf Canada interesting enough to buy if the NEP were still in place. I hope the Hon. Member will understand that. There are very fundamental matters at stake here. The National Energy Program made the oil and gas industry extremely unattractive for both Canadian and non-Canadian investors.

Mr. Speaker: I will recognize the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) on one question, and I will allow a final supplementary from the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell).

Ms. Copps: Will the Minister not agree that as a direct result of the National Energy Program and FIRA, the Canadianization of the petrochemical industry over the last ten years has tracked the same model that was developed by previous Liberal Governments? If it were not for FIRA and the NEP we would not have Canadianized the petrochemical industry to the extent of the 45 per cent which the Minister brags about today.

I very much fear, as do Canadian consumers, that the initiatives of the Government to embrace any kind of investment, regardless of the nature of origin and any kind of job guarantees, will result in the destruction of the very Canadianization about which he speaks today. Is the Minister not at all concerned that the former increases in Canadianization of the petrochemical industry will in fact be threatened by his Government's decision to introduce a Bill with no teeth in the form of Investment Canada?

Mr. Stevens: I am rather pleased, actually, that the Hon. Member is asking these kinds of questions. Surely it shows how totally out of touch some Members on the other side of the House are. The fact is that since 1974, when FIRA got its teeth into our economy, the total Canadianization in Canadian businesses—

Ms. Copps: Petrochemical was the question.

Mr. Stevens: I am giving you the whole figure.

Ms. Copps: I know what the figures are. The petrochemical industry.

● (1540)

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, total Canadianization amounted to \$16 billion. What people forget, certainly the socialists do not forget because Canadianization to them means nationalization, that is their creed—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stevens: —but the fact is that 33 per cent of that Canadianization was the takeover of petrochemical companies by the federal Government. The total takeovers were \$5.5 billion.

Ms. Copps: Are you against that now? Are you against Petro-Canada?

Mr. McDermid: Listen to the answer.