

Foreign Takeovers Review Act

defined, then I am more than ever determined to learn the nature and the extent of that problem.

We have a situation in Napanee I wish to air before the House.

Mr. Pepin: Please don't; please don't.

Mr. Alkenbrack: The minister says "please don't". I am sure he would be interested in listening to this because the jobs of 400 men are at stake.

Mr. Pepin: You write me a letter.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Napanee Industries, the successor to the old Napanee Iron Works, is a good-size firm in Napanee which manufactures the famous and nationally accepted Napanee automatic boiler. It also makes a line of railway equipment including flatcars, hoppers and railway cars. This firm is owned by Mr. Walter Gordon's firm, known as Corporate Management Limited. Due to a recent lack of orders for railway equipment and cars this firm is now for sale, and it is common knowledge that Mr. Gordon's firm is very anxious to sell it. I hope the minister is still interested in listening to this information.

Napanee Industries has for some time been the victim of unfair competition, especially from Montreal and Quebec firms, which I am told are subsidized by the Quebec government as a result of being the successful low bidders on railway equipment orders. Due to this competition, and because of the limited market in Canada for this product, it is plain to me, as I am sure it is plain to the minister, that any potential buyer of this firm must be one enjoying a wide international or continental market. Therefore, Corporate Management Limited is not apt to be able to sell this firm to any but a non-Canadian firm. In other words, the chances are that the bidders will be from the United States. Will the government, in the interests of preserving jobs for 400 men, allow the sale of this firm to an American buyer? Will Mr. Walter Gordon, who is head of the committee for an Independent Canada, still be willing to sell it to a United States firm? That is the present question around Napanee.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was reported the other day as having announced in Winnipeg that there would be a purchase of 2400 hopper cars to move western grain. He is reported to have said they would be purchased from two sources in Quebec or in Hamilton. Let me suggest to the Prime Minister that he investigate the possibility of having some of these hopper cars made in Napanee by Napanee Industries Ltd. where we need the work, thus forestalling the layoff of men at the present time. I trust the minister is more concerned with this problem now than when I first brought it up. I thank him for listening.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure what the hon. member is saying now is of interest to many members of the House, perhaps all members, but as the hon. member suggests, he is taking advantage of having the floor to air a situation which is obviously of local interest. The hon. member must appreciate that there is a specific bill before the House. I assume what he is saying now is relevant to Bill C-201. Perhaps he might indicate to the

Chair how this principle of relevancy is being observed at this time.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With due respect, that is exactly why I brought this matter up, because it pertains to the possible sale of this company to a company other than a Canadian one, and this is directly related to the purpose of Bill C-201. This firm has been the victim of unfair competition, and I have stated the source of this in the past. The firm has other opposition as well, in Hamilton, where they too, apparently, can bid lower prices in tendering on this equipment.

There has long been a fallacy in the thinking of some of our people that anti-Americanism is proof that one is pro-Canadian. Nothing could be further from the truth. To be against something simply means that you are against it. The same fallacy seems to be apparent in this legislation, and the government is proving to us that it is pro-Canadian industry by showing it is against someone else. If the government is determined to promote Canadian business and interests, it can count on my wholehearted support. I am all for such a policy, but I am afraid the present government is just against someone and not for anyone. I point to the recent tax reform package that was railroaded through this House by closure. This is an administrative nightmare for Canadian entrepreneurship, and has already discouraged businesses of long-standing to remain active. The tax legislation has already encouraged Canadian-owned businesses to sell out to anyone who has the cash and the willingness to buy. There is no longer a challenge to Canadians to embark on new business ventures with their own capital because the risk is too great and they have no protection.

Multinational corporations have been singled out by the NDP and nationalists as the great culprits. We are led to believe that these corporations are going to swallow up our country, bleed us dry, throw us aside and abandon us. This sounds very menacing and frightening unless you take a closer look at the situation, and especially if you consider the multinational corporations which are Canadian owned, and we have some of them. Our chartered banks were among the first multinational corporations in the world, and they have a good record in almost every country of the world. In almost every corner of the world you can find a branch of a Canadian bank, and these banks are among the most stable and respected banks you will find. The multinational character of our banks has been good for our country, and good for the Canadians who own stock in them.

Our banks and financial institutions have a virtual monopoly in our country. Efforts of foreign banking and investment houses to establish in Canada have been resisted firmly and decisively by our governments. Many of our top bankers believe we are running a great risk in adhering to such a policy. We want to locate and do locate in other countries, yet deny the same right to other countries here. It is said we want our bread buttered on both sides, and that we could be excluded from countries we exclude from Canada. This example is only to show that foreign investment is a two-sided coin, and that while we tend to over-react whenever someone shouts the alarm that we are being taken over, we do not hear such alarms

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]