

same to Nicaragua. It is saying to Canadian branch plants and subsidiaries in Canada that if the content of their product is sufficiently American they cannot trade with Nicaragua. That is influencing our trade policy.

● (1520)

Now can the Minister sit there, a thoughtful Minister on this particular issue, without saying that we will not accept that, that we will not have anything to do with a foreign power dictating export policy for companies in Canada?

[Translation]

Mrs. B. Tardif: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the Opposition Member who just spoke, I would like to stress the point that the debate has been going on for quite some time, first here in this House, then in committee. We had 102 amendments for consideration in committee, and we now have 99 amendments here before us. More than 80 hours have already been spent on this legislation. Compared with the FIRA Bill, which was discussed a number of years ago, we have already spent more time on Investment Canada than the Government of the day spent in this House considering the old FIRA legislation.

I would like to remind the House that we have already spent enough time, and Opposition Members have had all the time needed to express their views.

[English]

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on the Minister's arbitrary action in deciding that the Government will impose closure on the remaining stages of Bill C-15, the Investment Canada Bill. As my colleague just said, this Bill is probably the most important economic Bill we will see in this session or, quite possibly, in the entire four-year life of the Government. Under those circumstances, the Government's action in deciding to take some 80 amendments, which have yet to be considered in the House of Commons, and simply throw them out the window and dispose of them in one day is arbitrary and unjustifiable.

Mr. Stevens: They were dealt with in committee.

Mr. Cassidy: The Minister is perfectly right. However, he realizes that the committees are not televised. People interested in seeing the debate and in knowing what is happening were unable to see the debate in committee on the particular amendments put forward by the New Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, and quite possibly the Government as well. Yes, they can read them, I suppose, but it is appropriate that Parliament deal with them in a measured and reasonable way. They are important amendments, particularly when there are some serious and important differences of views in terms of what the Government is trying to do with the Investment Canada Bill, and what we have tried to do in terms of improvements by means of the amendments we have proposed.

The particular amendments now before us relate to an attempt to free up Investment Canada, the new agency which

is being created, from being completely under the thumb of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens). That is an important point. In theory, Investment Canada is being created in order to encourage investment in Canada by Canadians, as well as by non-Canadians, and in order to ensure enforcement of conditions and undertakings which are entered into by non-Canadian investors who are making investments in Canada. In practice, so long as the agency is under the thumb of the Minister there will be no guarantee that those particular provisions will be implemented.

I recognize that Parliament is a talking shop; it is a place where people talk about these issues. In the end, the legislation is passed and has to be implemented by the Government of the day. However, when the issues relate to foreign investment, and when foreign investment is responsible for close to 60 per cent of the manufacturing industry of Canada, and inhibits to such a degree the ability of Canadians to export into our major natural market in the United States, those questions are worth more than a few days of debate, followed by the decision of the Government to impose closure.

For example, if the Government had said that there were six or seven groups of amendments still to be considered and gave one day to each group of amendments—perhaps we on this side of the House would have objected to that—the citizens would have said that it was not totally unreasonable. Then in each area of amendment it would have been possible to have some debate in Parliament itself, in the House of Commons, not just in committee. That was not the Government's decision.

Is the Minister suggesting that 25 minutes should be given to each of the remaining groups of amendments, so that we can get through them all in the course of the remaining day of debate which will come after the guillotine motion has been put down? Does he honestly believe that we can have any kind of reasonable debate on groups of amendments which in some cases may be 10 amendments with different ideas, albeit in a related area? Does he believe that we can have a debate on all those amendments in 25 minutes, with 10 minutes from the Opposition and 10 minutes from the Government—

Mr. Stevens: You have already had 80 hours.

Mr. Cassidy: Of course we have had time in committee.

Mr. Stevens: And here.

Mr. Cassidy: I am talking about the right to debate here. We have been moving along at a measured pace. The pace is not the pace the Minister likes. The Minister is impatient. He wants to sit down in the Chateau Laurier and talk with his friends from the business community.

I would like to comment on a matter raised a few minutes ago. It is very interesting that when the Opposition wants to say things the Government does not like, the Minister for Regional Industrial Expansion comes into the House and announces that he will impose closure on the debate which is taking place. If there were huge amounts of legislation to be