

If the Government caves in once again and entrenches an "open sesame" policy in a free trade agreement, it will be very difficult to remove. Future governments will want to reserve the right to change the ridiculous, inefficient and irresponsible policy that the Government is following because it is not creating jobs or creating economic strengths, but weakening those very things. We will want to change that when we become the Government. However, if the Government entrenches that open-door policy in a free trade agreement it will be much more difficult for more enlightened Governments of the future to protect interests of Canadian workers and Canadian industries. That is why it is very important that sometime this week-end the Minister for International Trade, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), the Prime Minister and Mr. Reisman get together in the same room so at least they can come up with the same message and decide what it is they are trying to do. Canadians want a clear picture of exactly what we face.

● (1440)

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, after listening to that speech, I think it is obvious why the Liberals are in trouble with policy, not being able to make up their minds as to where they stand or what they want. We know where the socialist from Winnipeg—Fort Garry stands, diametrically opposed to the Liberal from Saint-Henri—Westmount and, we think, is somewhere in the middle of where his Right Hon. Leader stands. We are not sure.

The Liberals are trying to say to the people of Canada that they are receiving conflicting information. I want to read into the record what was said and I want the people of Canada to make that judgment. The Minister said this months ago in a speech in this House. The Liberals cry about this great revelation, that all of a sudden we have trade negotiations going on in Canada. Surprise! Some of it is controversial. Surprise! The country is going to hell in a handbasket they say. The NDP and the Liberals can only cry wolf for just so long until finally it will catch up with them. One of these days people are going to ask where they stand and what they stand for. We got an inkling today. They stand for bringing back the Foreign Investment Review Agency. They want to bring back that old dinosaur which held this country back from creating jobs for such a long period of time. It did not matter where one traveled in the world at that time, people said, "Canada is anti-investment. They don't want our money. They don't want jobs created there". Now the Liberal Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) wants to bring it back. I am glad we finally got a policy out of the Liberal Government. It wants to bring back FIRA.

I want to quote to the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry what the Minister said:

Also on the table is investment.

This was months ago, not yesterday. It was not Wednesday. It was months ago.

Supply

All countries around the world are loosening their investment policies. We did so when FIRA became Investment Canada. The result was a record \$6.8 billion worth of investment for 1986. So far we are dealing only with trade-related investment measures. The Americans want more. We are listening but we have not given the negotiators a general investment mandate.

There is nothing wrong with that. "The Americans want more", was the quote of months ago. Mr. Reisman said the United States is, "Anxious to talk about investment in the broadest sense". What great revelation is that? The Secretary of State for External Affairs today in the House of Commons in answering questions for 35 minutes on this subject was very up-front. Americans had indicated an interest in discussing investment. We are prepared to consider their specific proposals once we have received them in their final form. There is nothing inconsistent in all these things which have been said, and they have been said for months.

Perhaps I can ask the Hon. Member, other than for political haymaking, why is he bringing this subject up now, trying to befuddle the situation? I believe that if the quotes were checked they would be found to be very consistent. Why would he try to muddy up the waters now except for political purposes? Why has his Leader brought in this "unfettered" and "uncontrolled" nonsense, which are the Liberal's words, not the Conservative's words or our chief negotiator's words?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary, when he began his remark said he now understands why we are in trouble. I thought he meant trouble in the polls. There is only one Party which is in real trouble in the polls and that is the Conservative Party which is running at 23 per cent.

Mr. McDermid: Twenty-six per cent now. We are moving up. Be fair.

Mr. Axworthy: I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker. That Party has moved ahead slightly.

Mr. McDermid: The Liberals distort everything.

Mr. Axworthy: It is substantially behind the Liberals and substantially behind the NDP and has just moved ahead of the "don't know" category which, in the last three months, has had a larger proportion of voter support than the Conservative Party.

Mr. McDermid: We are going up.

Mr. Axworthy: The fact is that if anyone is talking about trouble, I suggest to the Parliamentary Secretary that he had better look in his own backyard because if any Party has a problem it is the people opposite.

The Hon. Member says this is no surprise. Of course, it is not, because we have been asking questions about this for two years. We have been asking if the Government is prepared to give up, to surrender, to transfer the right of full investment as a price of free trade negotiation. The Government all along has said, "Now, wait a minute. It is not on the table". There was all this dancing around until this week when we found out from the chief trade negotiator, Mr. Reisman, that in fact it