

Private Members' Business

provide all the flexibility Canadian minerals and metals producers need to offer a wider range of products for exports and discourage them from building processing facilities in Canada to supply foreign markets.

In concluding, Madam Speaker, I would like to apply my comments on government policy and mineral exports to the first item raised in the motion, namely a co-operative mineral-marketing agency. It would be difficult for this kind of agency to alter trading policies that exist in Canada and elsewhere. Consequently, the agency would be hard pressed to change the form in which minerals and metals are exported from Canada, without a system of subsidies to compensate for the harmful impact of the trading policies of other countries. Canada would also have trouble adopting a subsidy plan. First of all, it would be a very expensive undertaking, and second, Mr. Speaker, such a plan would be a contradiction of the direction in which multilateral trade negotiations in Geneva are going at the present time.

[English]

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mrs. Speaker, I am afraid that I was too nice and too good today. I allowed my colleague to speak ahead of me and somehow lost my turn. But last is not least. It is nice to have the Conservatives owing me one for a change.

I want to say that when I read this motion I was not quite clear what exactly the member had in mind when he said that he wanted the government to consider the advisability of developing, in consultation with provincial and local governments, with industry and with labour unions, a co-operative mineral marketing agency to further promote—and I want to emphasize this part of it—“Canadian refined minerals in the world marketplace”.

I was wondering whether the member was implying by this that our mineral exporting agencies that are privately owned in our mining sector do not promote its minerals properly. Is it that it is not selling its minerals? I do not understand this motion at all. I can tell you that I do understand the importance of the mining sector.

I was born in a mining town, a gold mining town, Kirkland Lake to be exact, in northern Ontario. As a child, I saw what happens when you run out of gold. The mine closes. You cannot do much about it when it is not there anymore.

When I married I moved to Sudbury, which is the nickel capital of the world. I have lived through all kinds of problems in that area. I can tell you that in the early 1980s we had a huge recession. We had a huge problem in Sudbury. There were mountainous stockpiles of minerals and the price of nickel on the world markets was extremely low. The demand was not there. You could not sell it internationally. I do not care how much you promoted it. The demand just was not there. I do not see how this kind of agency would have helped us in any way whatsoever in those years when there just was not any demand for the minerals. You can promote something all you want. If you do not have anybody who wants to buy it, what is the use?

I really would like to have at some point, if I could, further explanations as to what exactly is meant by “further promote Canadian refined minerals”. I understand very much the heartache of the single industry town when its products no longer sell, when the mine is forced to close, when there are no other jobs to go to, when it becomes very devastating.

I think it is very important that the government play a very strong role in encouraging secondary manufacturing in those areas with the mineral products involved, not just secondary manufacturing but the whole service sector that is involved in the particular mineral that is being extracted. Also, as much as possible the exploration and development of new sites must be encouraged.

The hon. member to my left mentioned Falconbridge as a mine that exports the raw matte to Norway to have it refined. That is correct. They export it to Norway to have it refined. That is a long story. It stems back to the early years when Inco had the patent on processing and Falconbridge was not able to get access to it. They found out that Norway was the only country where they were allowed to get a patent. They bought an old refinery and started processing their ores there.

I would like Falconbridge to further process its ores in Canada but, on the other hand, I am a lot happier that they are developing new mines, new technologies, new environmental controls. There are a lot of jobs in that, far more so than in having just the refinery there. We know, of course, that Inco does its refining in Copper Cliff, in my riding, and that is fantastic. They are now expending large amounts of money to control pollution. Again, we certainly encourage that. This motion would not have helped Inco reach the point where it is now.