

Investment Canada Act

Part of the purpose of the Bill is to encourage investment in Canada by Canadians. In Clause 5, to which we propose amendments, there are a number of duties given to the Minister. It seems to me that it would be very useful to elaborate upon them, if the Government is genuine in its concern for trying to develop investment in Canada by Canadians. We are talking about whether or not the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens) will take responsibility for industrial strategy within this country, something the previous Government talked a great deal about but did not implement. It seems that the same is happening under this new Government as well.

I am very much afraid that Clause 4, dealing with the duties of Ministers, and the carrying out of that in Clause 5 about which we are talking right now, is mere window dressing. In fact, they are put in there to try to placate critics of the Bill who say all the Government really wanted to do was to take away the protections of the Foreign Investment Review Act and not put anything in their place.

Our amendment refers to the need and the obligation of the Minister to develop medium-term and long-term public and private industrial sector investment guidelines which would be consistent with an industrial strategy that emphasizes full employment, growth, diversification, autonomy and export competitiveness of the Canadian economy. As a socialist, as a Canadian social democrat, I can say that I think those are good objectives for an industrial strategy. If we were to achieve those more effectively, we would have equity in terms of employment, and the country would look a lot better economically and socially than it does right now. If we set those as objectives of an industrial strategy, we have to worry about how we will get there. I am afraid that the present Minister and his Government are ideologically and temperamentally opposed to actually deciding what an industrial strategy should be and then working out how we will get there.

We recognize that our amendment cannot compel the Minister to do that, but at least it puts more into the legislation than is in it right now in terms of what the Minister's obligations are meant to be. We can then try to hold him accountable through the various means which we have in Parliament and which the people of Canada have at election and other times.

Mr. Thacker: Social democrats respect the law?

Mr. Cassidy: The Hon. Member must have been a member of that Conservative group which set up that "freedom from metric" gas station that consistently broke the law of Canada over two and a half years. I think he should talk to his own Members for a while.

Mr. Gurbin: That is not what the judge said.

Mr. Cassidy: The judge has not said anything.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order. There is only a 10-minute period for speeches. We should not waste it on heckling.

Mr. Cassidy: I point out to Hon. Members that not only has there been no court ruling; in fact, there is no law to be broken right now because the Public Works Nuisance Act regulations, which were enacted by Cabinet a few days ago, have not been gazetted. They do not have the force of law. The RCMP is being forced to make illegal arrests out there at the direction of the Hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. La Salle). I suggest to members of the government Party that they tell the Minister of Public Works to stop breaking the law and making the RCMP enforce a law which does not exist.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please. Everyone in the House knows very well the concern of the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) on that issue. We are presently debating another piece of legislation.

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I apologize, but I think you might have brought our colleagues on the government side to order when they chose to introduce those irrelevant remarks.

Another amendment in this group calls upon the Minister to convene industrial sector advisory groups, bringing together business and labour, provincial and local authorities, which would seek to recommend on investment policies and priorities. I cannot over-stress the importance of that approach if we as Canadians are in fact to be successful in implementing an industrial strategy and holding up our own in terms of the world competition with which we are faced right now.

During the course of his comments on the Bill—and I think it was accurate—the Minister said that we have to recognize that there is a changing competitive environment out there. The question which has not been adequately debated in the Chamber, in the Commons Finance Committee or any place else, is what we as Canadians will do about it and how we will respond. Too often, whether it is Ontario or federal Conservatives or whether it is business spokespeople, I hear people saying that the thing to do is to beat down workers, force them to accept minimum wage and impose the standards of Taiwan on Canadian workers rather than use our human resources, brain power and skills to build upon our natural resource base, to maintain a decent standard of living and to maintain the kind of economy we have known over the course of years.

Everyone knows that the key to industries in the future will be the best use of human resources. It will not be working more, but working smarter. If we want to work smarter, this means learning how the different elements in a society or in a business enterprise, or for that matter between Government and business, can in effect work together. If we are to have effective industrial strategies, it will require having business, labour, local communities, regions and voluntary groups working together to devise the strategies which they will then buy into and be prepared to co-operate in implementing.

That is extremely important and is largely ignored in the present law which says that the Minister, if he feels like it, may consult and organize conferences of representatives of industry and labour or provincial and local authorities in exercising his powers and in performing his duties under the Act. Any Minister can have conferences. That is done all the