

are higher than that, and there are some serious social and economic problems in that area. It is in the context of this Bill as well that we hope to address some of those economic problems.

When we examine the other provisions in that ERD agreement, whether it is the element of tourism, science and technology, agriculture, the mineral sector, or the industry sector, collectively, we should see some very heartwarming opportunities for job generation on a permanent basis.

I must remark in the context of forestry, as I did yesterday, that it is notable that the forestry critic for the Liberal Party, the Hon. Member for Humber-Port-au-Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin), that noteworthy gentleman who sits over there occasionally, has never once directed a question from his seat to the Minister of State for Forestry during Question Period. Yesterday, the Leader of the Liberal Party spoke out about the need to do something for forestry. I find that passing strange because in seven months during which this House sat, that Party's forestry critic has never asked a question of the Minister during Question Period. Clearly, that should spell out to Canadians the shallow depth of interest which that Party has in one of the most major resources of Canada, namely, the forestry sector. It is the biggest employment generator and money earner by far. It is head and shoulders above all other sectors. Yet we still await a question from the forestry critic of the Liberal Party. That clearly gives us a sense of where that Party's priorities lie.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Where is the critic? He's not even here.

Mr. Brisco: He is not here. Let me move on with respect to Bill C-15, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sure my colleague, the Hon. Member for Kootenay West (Mr. Brisco), did it inadvertently, but it is a well known tradition of the House that we do not refer to Hon. Members who are absent from their places. I believe he did that at the urging of one of his colleagues. I just want to make the point that that is an understanding we have.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) is correct.

Mr. Brisco: Mr. Speaker, I can understand the genuine concern of the Hon. Member, but I would like to point out—and I think my colleague on this side would agree—that the comment did not come from me. I am sure the Hon. Member would be quite prepared to indicate that the comment came from him. I am prepared to accept the responsibility, but I do know the rules.

With respect to Bill C-15, one of the first facts was introduced by the Minister when he said that the European economic forum reported two years ago that on the list of 24 countries which welcomed foreign investment, Canada was twenty-fourth. Last year the list was expanded to 28 countries. Canada, on that expanded list, was twenty-eight. That is the

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bottom of the line, Mr. Speaker. It does not indicate that we welcome foreign investment or that we are interested in foreign investment. It indicates that we do not welcome foreign investment, that we really do not want it. "Keep out", is what the sign says. There is a big sign there with the Liberal Party logo below it which says, "Keep out foreign investment".

• (1550)

Surely the fact is that Canadians do not have that attitude today. That really is a mind-set of a former Government, not a mind-set of Canadians today, with a couple of notable exceptions. I would like to turn to one of those notable exceptions who appeared before the Standing Committee on Regional Development, namely, Mr. Mel Hurtig. I found him to be a very interesting gentleman, and in the minutes of that standing committee, at page 13:5, he is reported to have said this:

I would suggest that you scrap this bill—

Then he goes on to offer what he considers to be some positive solutions and makes some very interesting remarks. On page 13:11 he is reported to have said:

—you asked me about the national energy program, and I think my answer may surprise you. I live in Alberta and I have seen the national energy program in operation. I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying I strongly support the goals and objectives of the National Energy Program.

Now, there is a man with courage. Perhaps he is not smart, but he has courage. There is a man from the Province of Alberta who said that he supported the National Energy Program. Having become a little nervous about that statement and in order, perhaps, to protect himself later on, he went on to say:

Having said I agree with the objectives of the NEP, I must tell you that I thought it was poorly thought out.

Now he is seeking some concurrence, and there is a wide body of opinion that would support him on that. He went on to say:

I thought it was hastily put together, and there is no question in my mind that some aspects of the NEP were very damaging to the Canadian petroleum sector as well.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, he loved it. He thought the NEP was great because it was his view that what the NEP would do for Canada would be to drive out those foreign giants. That is what it would do, drive out foreign investment. He was not one bit concerned about the fact that at that time in the economic life of Canada, the Province of Alberta was the single biggest tax generator in Canada with the highest levels of employment. Obviously he is not aware of the fact that it was Canadians who were crucified by that program, that it was the blue collar worker who was hurt the most.

He said he was there to observe. Let me tell you that I was there to observe as well, and I had the opportunity, although I am from British Columbia, to spend several months in Alberta during that disastrous period. I talked with the workers, with the service and supply industry which was collapsing like a house of cards, and I talked with the Canadian oil people. I can tell you that it was a story of unmitigated disaster. I drove into the town of Fort St. John in my province some months